100% OFFICIAL CONTENT

Dungeons & Dragons

SLAY THE REPTILE WARLORD OF THE FORGOTTEN REALMS!

DUNGEON®

ISSUE 144 · MARCH 2007

MADNESS UNDER THE ISLE OF DREAD

DIAMONDS ARE A MODRON'S BEST FRIEND

paizo publishing™

DarcKnyght

ALL-NEW DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ADVENTURES FEATURING:

ABOLETHS › BRAIN COLLECTORS › AN ARCANALOTH ARCHMAGE

WOLFGANG BAUR'S DUNGEONCRAFT › DOWNER › MT. ZOGON

ISSUE #144 MARCH 2007 VOLUME 21, NO 3

DUNGEON

paizo.com/dungeon

Publisher: **Erik Mona**
Editor-in-Chief: **James Jacobs**
Senior Art Director: **Sean Glenn**
Art Director: **Drew Pocza**
Assistant Editor: **Jeremy Walker**
Assistant Editor: **James Lafond Sutter**
Advertising & Marketing Director: **Joshua J. Frost**
Production Director: **Jeff Alvarez**
Prepress Manager: **Kelly O'Brien**
Circulation Director: **Pierce Watters**
For Wizards of the Coast: **Rich Redman and Ed Stark**

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

Peter Bergting, Julie Dillons, Kyle Hunter, Andrew Hou, Robert Lazzaretti, Warren Mahy, Tony Moseley, UDON with Todd Gak,Espen Grundetjern, Shane Law, Joe Ng, Jim Zubkavich, Chris West, Ben Wootten

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Wolfgang Baur, Russell Brown, Phillip Larwood, Mike McArtor, F. Wesley Schneider, James Lafond Sutter, Christopher Wissel

Special Thanks to Todd Stewart

PAIZO PUBLISHING, LLC
2700 Richards Road, Suite 201
Bellevue, WA 98005-4200

Chief Executive Officer: **Lisa Stevens**
Corporate Accountant: **Dave Erickson**
Technical Director: **Vic Wertz**
Director of Operations: **Jeff Alvarez**

Dungeon March 2007, Volume 21, Number 3 (ISSN# 0890-7102/USPS 0002-005) is published monthly by Paizo Publishing, LLC, 2700 Richards Road, Suite 201, Bellevue, WA 98005-4200, United States of America. Periodicals Postage Paid at Bellevue, WA 98009-9998 and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to *Dungeon*, Paizo Publishing LLC, 2700 Richards Road, Suite 201, Bellevue, WA 98005-4200.

No part of this magazine may be reproduced (except for review purposes) without the prior written consent of the publisher. Material published herein does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Paizo Publishing, LLC, its employees, or its editorial staff, who are not liable for opinions expressed herein. Most product names are trademarks owned by the companies that publish those products. Use of the name of any product without mention of trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status. Trademarks related to the Dungeons & Dragons brand, including *Dragon*, *Dungeon*, and D&D are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and are used under license from Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a division of Hasbro, Inc.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO
Paizo Publishing, 2700 Richards Road, Suite 201,
Bellevue, WA 98005-4200.

©2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

BACK ISSUES: **paizo.com** or call 425-289-0060.

SUBSCRIPTIONS/CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Contact Paizo Publishing at **subscriptions@paizo.com** or call 425-289-0060.

Although we accept subscriptions to prison addresses, delivery is subject to the discretion and/or whim of prison personnel. If you have not received a magazine or premium, please consult with your Mail Room authorities. This publisher is not responsible for non-delivery.

ADVERTISING: Contact *Dungeon*'s Advertising & Marketing Director, Joshua J. Frost, at (425) 289-1345. All ads are subject to approval by Paizo Publishing, LLC, which reserves the right to reject any ad for any reason. Advertisers and/or agencies of advertisers agree not to hold Paizo Publishing, LLC liable for any loss or expense from alleged wrongdoing that may arise out of the publication of such advertisements.

DISTRIBUTION: National and international distribution is provided by Curtis Circulation Company, 730 River Road, New Milford, NJ 07646. Tel: (201) 634-7400. Fax: (201) 634-7499.

OPEN GAME CONTENT: Unless otherwise noted, this Paizo Publishing, LLC product contains no Open Game Content. No portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without permission. To learn more about the Open Gaming License and the d20 System License, please visit **wizards.com/d20**.

Printed in the U.S.A.

SAVAGE TIDE ADVENTURE PATH

28 THE LIGHTLESS DEPTHS
F. Wesley Schneider and James Lafond Sutter
When the PCs journey deep under the Isle of Dread to find the source of the *shadow pearls*, they discover horrors beyond imagining in a haunted underground city perched on sanity's razored edge. A Savage Tide Adventure Path scenario for 11th-level characters.

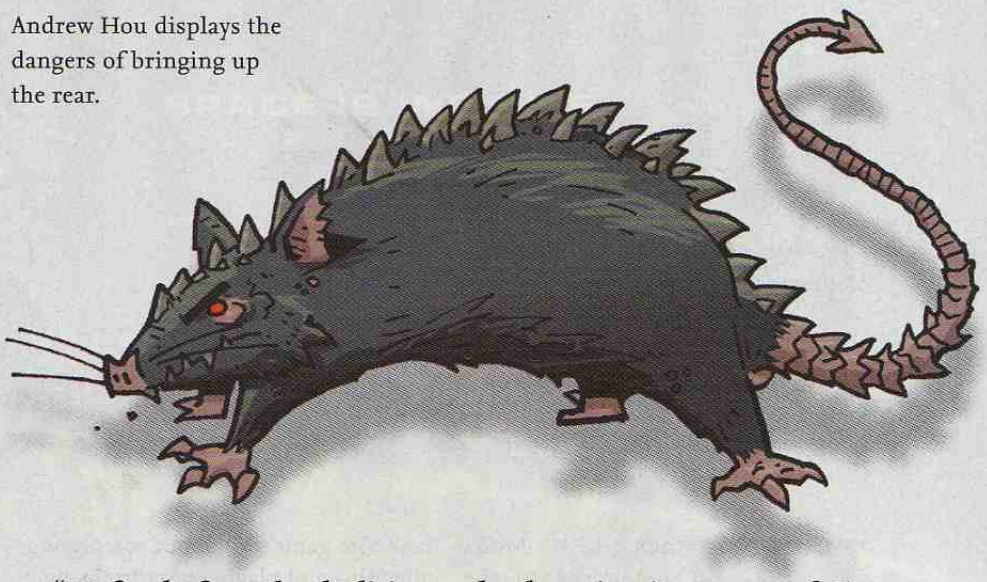
ADVENTURES

16 THE MUSTER OF MORACH TOR
Russell Brown
Deep in the Evermoors, a plan to conquer the town of Nesmé is forming, and the only person who can warn the town is about to be sacrificed to a slimy god. Can the PCs rescue the missing officer in time to save Nesmé? A Forgotten Realms adventure for 4th-level characters.

68 DIPLOMACY
Christopher Wissel
Matched against some of the most powerful, cunning, and ruthless races from across the planes in a battle of wits, it's the PCs' task to ensure that the wealth of ages does not fall into the wrong hands. But beware, for cunning wordplay is not the only way to win a debate. A D&D adventure for 18th-level characters.

ON THE COVER

Andrew Hou displays the dangers of bringing up the rear.



CARTOONS

26 The Portent
66 Mt. Zogon
96 Downer

COLUMNS

8 Editorial
12 Prison Mail
86 Gamer Guide
88 Dungeoncraft
98 Map of Mystery

CAMPAIGN WORKBOOK

92 The Dungeon
94 Critical Threat

"We fought far under the living earth, where time is not counted. Ever he clutched me, and ever I hewed him, till at last he fled into dark tunnels. They were not made by Durin's folk, Gimli son of Glóin. Far, far below the deepest delvings of the Dwarves, the world is gnawed by nameless things. Even Sauron knows them not. They are older than he."

J.R.R. Tolkien
"The Lord of the Rings, Volume III"

DUNGEON ADVENTURE PLAYER REWARDS!

Take advantage of the RPGA's Player Rewards program by scoring points with the adventures from this issue of *Dungeon*! Each adventure is worth 2 D&D Player Rewards points, and remains active until 4/30/07.

RPGA NETWORK

Drop by rpga.com for more details, and use the following adventure codes:
The Muster of Morach Tor (144MT1DN)
The Lightless Depths (144LD1DN)
Diplomacy (144DI1DN)

GIRLS ARE LUCKIER

When Erik Mona announced to the office that he was going to run an Age of Worms campaign and invited the entire editorial staff to play, I went through my standard pre-campaign ritual of trying to decide what kind of character to make. Listening to what the others were talking about playing, it quickly became obvious that we were facing "Standard New Campaign Problem #1." No one wanted to play the cleric.

Which actually worked for me, for two reasons. First, clerics are one of my favorite classes to play, and second, we'd just received Wayne Reynolds' concept art for the iconic cleric of Wee Jas we planned on introducing with the new adventure path. Of course, when I told Erik I was going to play a female character based on this iconic, his response was, "Oh... you're one of those!"

By which he meant a transvirtual—a gamer who plays characters not of his or her gender.

Every now and then, you see threads about transvirtuals pop up on gamer messageboards: "Do you let players play characters of the opposite sex?" and so on. To me, it seems ridiculous to get worked up over it. Why is it so hard to accept a guy playing a girl character (or vice versa) when most gamers don't bat an eye at the six-foot-six construction worker who wants to play a halfling ninja, or the mild-mannered accountant who rolls up a Large minotaur barbarian? The game's all about roleplaying, after all—and playing opposite-gender characters is no less outlandish than playing alternate-species characters.

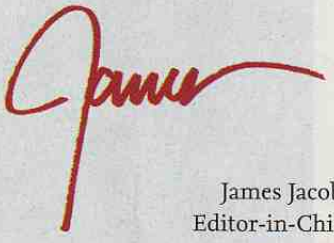
There are plenty of reasons I prefer to play female characters. Sometimes, it's as simple as a mechanical choice (the prestige class that caught my eye requires a female character, for example). At other times, the backstory and flavor of the campaign world makes female characters more interesting to play. But more often than not, it just comes down to personal preference. You all know the guy who always plays dwarves, right? Well, I'm the guy who always plays the girl.

Actually, there's also a superstitious reason. Usually when joining a new campaign, I'd started out with a male character only to have him brutally ruined a few sessions later. Pyrus the rogue was torn from horseback by a flock of ravenous blood-draining weasel bats. Sukoro was dropped to negative hit points and then *death knelled* by a minor NPC cleric hoping to get a temporary combat boost. Thistle Ambermead the halfling paladin got done in by a devil. In each of these cases, my replacement character was female, and that replacement character went on to last to the end of the campaign. Furthermore, it seems that when I play female characters from the start of a campaign (such as the case of Tyralandi in Erik Mona's campaign), that character manages to survive as well. Female characters are just plain luckier.

Usually.

When poor Chuko the kenku got chopperblocked by a goblin's axe in Jason Bulmahn's EBERRON campaign, I rolled up a female anti-construct ranger. She lasted exactly two sessions before being burned to death by a critical hit from a *scorching ray*. With my next character, I went with a changeling, a character choice that allowed me to play both genders at the same time. No luck—rended to ribbons by a troll. For my fourth character, a drow barbarian, I decided to pull out all the stops—here was a character who was not only female, but was essentially made out of hit points and high Fortitude bonuses. And so far, it seems to be working—Zulshyn's survived giants, dinosaur bellies, and dozens of poisonings so far, despite Jason's unceasing attempts to murder her.

It just goes to show you that no matter how lucky a girl might be, there's always someone out there with an evil, high-rolling die carved from the black heart of a meteorite to confirm bad guy critical hits. But that's another editorial entirely—one that Jason won't let me write.



James Jacobs
Editor-in-Chief
james.jacobs@paizo.com

Tell us what you think of this issue.

Write to: Prison Mail, Paizo Publishing, 2700 Richards Road, Suite 201, Bellevue, WA 98005-4200 or send an email to dungeon@paizo.com.

Check out the *Dungeon* messageboards at paizo.com/dungeon

DUNGEON #141

SET SAIL FOR THE SAVAGE TIDE!
DUNGEON
BRAVE THE BEHOLDER'S LAIR!
RETURN TO LOST TAMOACHAN!
SILVER DRAGONS • SEA MONSTERS • PICKLED MEPHITS
MONTE COOK'S DUNGEONCRAFT • DOWNER • MT. ZOGON

Fans of NPC-heavy roleplaying adventures rejoice!

The Savage Tide set sail in *Dungeon* #141 for the notorious shores of the Isle of Dread. Along the way, in Richard Pett's "The Sea Wyvern's Wake," the PCs discover that getting there is half the fight. And if, along the way, there's a chance to stop at one of D&D's most infamous lost cities—the mysterious ruins of Tamoachan—so much the better!

This issue also included a miniatures scale poster map of the *Sea Wyvern*, a ship destined to play a key role in many Savage Tide adventures to come.

On other, less savage fronts, *Dungeon* #141 introduced the city of Talantier, the setting for Nicolas Logue's "Swords of Dragonslake," and gave the PCs a memorable opportunity to interact with a whole cast of ecclectic NPCs. Plus, it had a nymph assassin, so how could we *not* publish it?

For those readers demanding, "Less yak, more hack," this issue's third adventure serves up combat and mayhem aplenty in Johnathan M. Richards' beholder-riffic "Vlindarian's Vault."

Back issues of *Dungeon* #141 are available at paizo.com.

Prison Mail

Beauty's in the Eyes

That beholder on the cover of *Dungeon* #141 is just beautiful... at least in a sadistic, panic-inducing, vicious DM sort of way. I really appreciate the close-up view and its alien, fish-like scariness. (We've come a long way from a basketball with the knobby eyestalks.) I know that scantily-clad cover girls and anime action scenes sell more issues of *Dungeon*, but if I were a ten-year-old kid again, this is exactly the kind of picture that would make me say, "Whoa, that's cool! Maybe I should check out this D&D thing I've heard so much about." Anyway, thanks for adding some fright to this Halloween gaming season!

Cory Tadlock
Chicago, IL

I'm glad you liked the cover! We try to vary the types of covers we use on the magazine, even though this means that some covers might be less successful on the newsstand. Not only does this keep one issue of the magazine from looking identical to every other issue, it also gives us a chance to appeal to more potential customers.

A Higher Level

I read a published comment from a reader in issue #141, and the response from Mr. Jacobs, but I don't think either explained the source of the problem for epic level play in 3.0 and 3.5 Dungeons & Dragons gaming. I don't think that it is a WotC conspiracy, and although it may be true that players prefer levels 6–12 (they sure are my favorite), Mr. Jacobs didn't really give a reason why this is the case.

I can state from my personal experiences that one of the real problems with high-level play is "save or die" syndrome. I know this has been hashed out in online forums, and probably at any gaming table that has played high-level adventures. Perhaps this is WotC's fault, since they designed the rules that the game is played by, but I don't see it being a conspiracy.

The second serious problem with high-level play is that players often get bored with their characters, or with the world they are playing in. It happens. In fact, it happens often. People want new experiences, and after 15 levels of playing the fighter, cleric, wizard, or whatever, they want to try something new.

Perhaps this is why Wizards focuses on the mid-level player more, and I don't think I can blame them. There are some third-party high-level balanced books out there (or at least more balanced), like Monte Cook's *Arcana Evolved*, and gamers that are disappointed by the standard rules might want to check them out.

Kevin Reynolds
Via Email

Your observations hit the nail on the head, but there are plenty of other reasons why most people prefer to play in the mid-level range. Basically, 6th-level to 12th-level is the "sweet

NEXT MONTH IN DUNGEON

THE DISTRACTION

BY TIM HITCHCOCK

A band of settlers awaits certain death upon the vicious blades of massing gnoll hordes. Can the PCs distract the ravenous army long enough for reinforcements to arrive? A D&D adventure for 3rd-level characters.

VILE ADDICTION

BY STEFAN HAPP, STEPHEN S. GREER, B. MATTHEW CONKLIN III, TOM GANZ, AND ASHAVAN DOYON

A horrific drug has siezed the population of the strange city of Exag, yet confronting its source only reveals the true extent of a dire new threat. Part one of the three-part Seeds of Sehan Campaign Arc, this is a D&D adventure for 8th-level characters.

BACKDROP: EXAG

BY STEFAN HAPP, STEPHEN S. GREER, B. MATTHEW CONKLIN III, TOM GANZ, AND ASHAVAN DOYON

Explore the ancient streets of Exag, a secluded city whose secrets and mysteries are among the oldest in histroy.

CITY OF BROKEN IDOLS

BY TITO LEATI

The central mesa of the Isle of Dread is taboo to the locals, a place shrouded in mystery and cloaked in rumor. The time has come to confront what dwells atop the island's savage crown. A Savage Tide Adventure Path scenario for 13th-level characters.

spot" for D&D. Most of the iconic D&D monsters work best here, and on top of that, the highest variety of monsters lives in this power band. Rest assured, however, that DUNGEON will still support the low-level and high-level ends of the game every month. It's only when you get above 20th-level that things really start to look lonely...

Don't Drop the Mini

It's ironic that your letters column is labeled "Prison Mail," considering that I'm currently an inmate of a Virginia institution.

All the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS books, including *DUNGEON*, make time and life more bearable for me and many fellow inmates, considering the constraints on what we may order or possess. Our play is limited to paper, books, and a homemade spinner to represent dice rolls, but we continue to endure.

Now, when I received issue #141 in the mail (mail being one of the most anticipated pleasures in prison), I was overwhelmed with sheer joy, like a child on Christmas morning, to find a map insert made to scale. I immediately put it to use by carving little figures from soap, using homemade tools that I procured from certain supplies. I personally carved myself a rogue character—considering that was the trade that helped get me incarcerated, it suited me.

I, and many other fellow inmates, would love to see many more map inserts like the *Sea Wyvern*, or perhaps scale map inserts of all the maps in *DUNGEON*, as they greatly enhance play for people like us with limited access to DUNGEONS & DRAGONS supplies. Thank you.

Brian Wood
Richmond, VA

You're not alone, Brian. The vast majority of our physical letters these days are from incarcerated readers who don't have regular access to email. It's good to hear that DUNGEON's helping to pass the time on the inside, and we all got a kick out of the ingenuity of creating soap miniatures. Other prisoners have sent us fan art, house rules, and even homemade fold-up dice crafted from paper.

As for those minis-scale maps, we have one more planned for later in the Savage Tide Adventure Path. You can probably expect them to show up twice a year. I'd love to do one in every issue, but poster maps cost a lot of money.

Those soap minis sound great, though. I think we all know at least one gamer who can use a little more soap in their life.

Who the Heck is Cegilune?

In several issues, there are mentions of gods from the GREYHAWK pantheon that are not detailed in the core set of gods in the *Player's Handbook*. Examples include Incabulos in *DUNGEON* #105 or Procan and Kelanen in *DUNGEON* #106. I've seen other examples in *DRAGON* magazine, such as Cegilune in *DRAGON* #345. I was wondering if there was a complete list available for these other deities. I've checked the D&D books that I have, and I've been unable to find a complete list, just a few references (such as Doresain from *Libris Mortis*). Could you point me in the right direction to find a complete list?

Devin Mesnard
Via Email

When you're publishing three dozen adventures a year, it quickly gets old seeing the same deities over and over. Additionally, there are certain gaps in the core list—where are the gods of artists? What about chaotic neutral deities who aren't into thievery? Who do you turn to when you need an overlord of an obscure race of humanoids like xvarts? In these cases, we (and our authors) tend to turn to alternate deities, mining them from other sources or making up entirely new ones. We include sidebars that give you all the information you need to know about that particular deity, precisely because that prevents the need to track down the details in another book.

Although the LIVING GREYHAWK Gazetter is the best place to go for more details on the full pantheon of GREYHAWK deities, you can also get an abbreviated list from Complete Divine. *It's a little hard to find, but issue 3 of the LIVING GREYHAWK Journal has the best compiled table of GREYHAWK's deities I've seen. Note that deities like Doresain and Cegilune aren't officially part of the GREYHAWK pantheon. Unfortunately, the list that it sounds like you're looking for—a complete list of all deities created for D&D from all campaigns—doesn't exist. Indeed, the thought of the research required to compile such a list kinda gives me the shakes.* —James Jacobs

The Muster of Morach Tor

BY RUSSELL BROWN
BY UDON WITH JOE NG AND ESPEN GRUNDETJERN
BY ROB LAZZARETTI

FORGOTTEN REALMS | LOW LEVEL (1ST–5TH) | TEMPERATE MARSHES

Attacks by trolls and giants from the Evermoors have reduced the Riders of Nesmé to a shadow of their former strength, and the First Speaker of Nesmé has taken bold action. To bolster her forces and protect the town, she recruited the Khoroshen, a tribe of lizardfolk living in the low marshes of the Evermoors, only to find that there are limits to how much loyalty money can buy.

"The Muster of Morach Tor" is a D&D adventure designed for four 4th-level characters. The adventure takes place in the town of Nesmé and the wilds of the Evermoors in the FORGOTTEN REALMS.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The iron-mining town of Nesmé sits on the edge of the Evermoors, which have long been home to scattered gangs of trolls, known in the north as the Everlasting Ones.

In the Year of the Banner (1368 DR), Nesmé experienced a dramatic rise in the number of troll and orc attacks. Although the Riders of Nesmé turned back such attacks time and again, they wreaked havoc with trade and the local mining industry. As the attacks continued into the next year, adventurers hired by Nesmé discovered that fog and cloud giants had moved into the Evermoors, displacing the former inhabitants and shrouding the area in perpetual mist.

In the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR), during the orc invasion of the Frost Hills, Nesmé was sacked and ruined by an army of trolls. The trolls were driven off thanks to the help of a contingent of dwarves from Mithral Hall and Mirabar, and by the next year, Nesmé had begun rebuilding. The threat posed by the giant tribes of the Evermoors and the still-displaced trolls remained, however, forcing would-be settlers back behind Nesmé's walls.

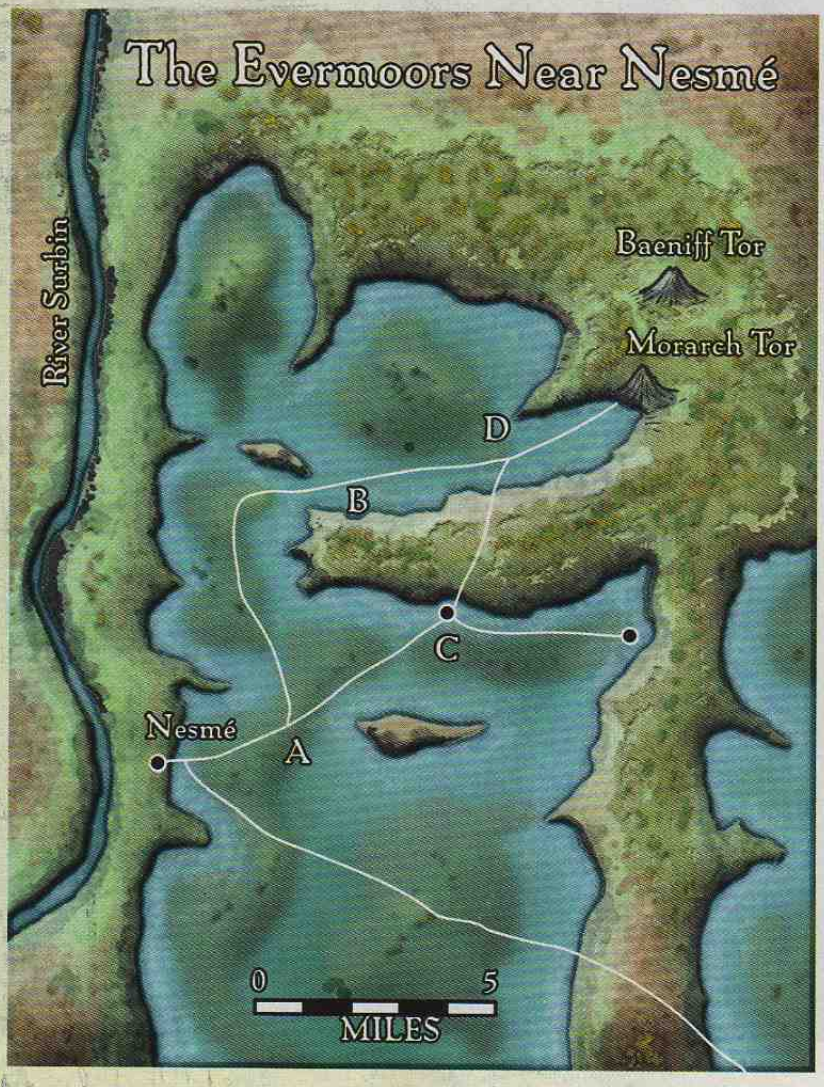
Since the Year of the Wild Magic (1372 DR), Nesmé has had to rely on its own defenses, as the cities of the Silver Marches have been forced to refocus their forces northward, along the frontier with the newly established Kingdom of Many Arrows. In the face of repeated giant raids and the threat that the trolls might one day regroup, Nesmé's First Speaker, Tessarin "Longtresses" Alaurun, has stretched her finances to pay the Riders of Nesmé and maintain a small force of Uthgardt barbarian mercenaries. Tessarin has also enlisted the help of a local tribe of lizardfolk

called the Khoroshen to defend the watch posts along the low, marshy approaches to the town.

Tessarin's efforts appear to be working. The giants have not attacked for months, her soldiers have reclaimed forts out on the moors, and brave settlers are moving back to abandoned hamlets.

In actuality, giants have left the town alone because they have been busy driving the remaining trolls out of every bog and crag of the western Evermoors. The trolls have made attempts to resist the giants, but they are only able to organize in small bands. In a risky act of betrayal, a Khoroshen named Uhndek persuaded many of the trolls that since they cannot defeat the giants they should instead attack Nesmé, led by Uhndek himself. When Nesmé is conquered, the lizardfolk will claim the fortified town while the trolls take the nearby moors.

Not everything is going according to Uhndek's plan, however. A few days ago, Tessarin sent her aide, Chaver Tegarech, to check on the lizardfolk watch post at a rocky hill called Morach Tor—the same hill where Uhndek plans to gather his troll army. Chaver stumbled upon a meeting between Uhndek and a pair of trolls, at which point he was captured and sent to the mines below Baeniff Tor to be sacrificed.



ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Tessarin recruits the PCs to travel to Morach Tor and find out what happened to Chaver. When the PCs arrive, they find that Khoroshen lizardfolk still patrol the swamps around the rotting settlement. The Khoroshen leader, Uhndek, claims that Chaver arrived but returned to Nesmé the next day. Signs that Chaver was taken captive may lead to a fight.

With the help of a svirfneblin captive, the PCs travel across the marsh to a flooded mine beneath another rocky hill named Baeniff Tor. To save Chaver, the PCs must defeat the Khoroshen priestess Thaalis and enter the chamber of a sacred giant crocodile.

As the PCs head back toward Nesmé, they encounter the troll army leaving Morach Tor. They can send warning to Nesmé using messenger ravens, or they can take the shortcut across the marsh to beat the trolls back. If the PCs warn Nesmé in time, the town recalls its soldiers and repels the attack successfully.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The adventure begins when the PCs arrive at the town of Nesmé and have their audience with First Speaker Tessarin. There are many ways for the PCs to find their way there.

- **Vil'Kenna** (CG female human barbarian 3), an Uthgardt barbarian of the Sky Pony tribe, tells the PCs that she is on her way to Nesmé to join several of her clansmen, who have been hired to hunt trolls and giants in the moors. She's eager for company, and urges the party to travel with her.
- **Rihen Isothe** (N male half-orc aristocrat 3/warrior 1), the illegitimate son of a wealthy human merchant, hires the PCs to escort him to Nesmé to pick up a special family crest sword he's had forged from the town's exceptional steel. When the PCs arrive, the sword's smith explains that Lady Tessarin is looking for adventurers.

CHAPTER ONE: DESPERATE TIMES IN NESMÉ

From the outside, the town looks like a dying stone creature, backed against the banks of the Surbrin in its retreat from the Evermoors. Columns of dark smoke tumble up from behind crumbling stone walls. A barge loaded with lumber and charcoal is docked beside the remains of a fine stone bridge.

Half of the low stone buildings in town are in ruins, creating a maze of thin streets strewn with rubble. Townspeople work elbow to elbow in the smoke, covered in gray ash. The round, four-story Temple of Waukeen rises above this chaotic labyrinth, seemingly untouched by the destruction surrounding it.

Among the townsfolk wander armed men wearing the gray and gold sash of the Riders of Nesmé or the furs of the Sky Pony barbarian tribe. If the PCs inquire about work or ask to see Lady Tessarin, they are directed to the Temple of Waukeen.

Nesmé (small town): Magical; AL NG; 800 gp limit; Assets 78,640 gp; Population 1,966; Integrated (humans 67%, lightfoot halflings 10%, half-elves 8%, shield dwarves 6%, moon elves 5%, rock gnomes 3%, others 1%).

Authority Figure: **First Speaker Tessarin "Longtresses" Alaurun** (NG female human wizard 13).

Notes: Nesmé is a mining town, with some of the best iron mines in the north lying directly below its streets. When determining the availability of steel weapons and armor in Nesmé, assume it is a small city (15,000 gp limit).

Lady Tessarin's Request

When the PCs arrive at the Temple of Waukeen, a wheezing old priest in golden robes leads them up three flights of stairs and through a set of double doors into Tessarin's meeting room.

This room is round, with small glass windows spaced along dark stone walls. The wooden beams of the temple's peaked roof serve as the room's ceiling. Twelve worn chairs sit along the walls, and a long stone table adorns the center of the room. The table is partially covered with stacks of scrolls and books, but a beautifully engraved map is visible in its center.

Tessarin leans over the table, studying the map. She wears a plain blue and tan robe and has tied her long, ash-blonde hair back. She greets the PCs quickly but respectfully, then immediately launches into a no-nonsense overview of the situation.

"My aide, Chaver Tegarech, rode north four days ago to visit the watch post at Morach Tor and never returned. That watch post is defended by an allied tribe of lizardfolk called the Khoroshen, but the road to Morach Tor can be dangerous." She grabs a stick of charcoal and places a sheet of paper from a nearby stack over the engraved map on the table. She rubs with the charcoal and a detailed map of the area northeast of Nesmé gradually appears. She then marks Morach Tor on the map, along with two trails leading there, and points a charcoal-stained finger at the shorter route. "Chaver knew the dangers of the direct route through the lowlands, and he was in no hurry. The longer route to Morach Tor along the north road is eighteen miles long. The shorter route to the northeast is twelve miles."

The First Lady offers the PCs 500 gp and two *potions of invisibility* if they can return Chaver safely to Nesmé. If a PC asks for the potions ahead of time and makes a DC 15 Diplomacy check, Tessarin hands them over.

Tessarin is willing to answer a few specific questions, but she is very busy and can't spend much more time with the PCs. She has no horses for the party, but gives them as much food as they require and provides a room at the House of the Wise Unicorn. If the PCs succeed on a DC 10 Gather Information check around town, they learn any of the information regarding the town's history from the Adventure Background or its description.

CHAPTER TWO: INTO THE EVERMOORS

An old stone road slopes up from the town onto the hills of the high moors. Steep streambeds and small plateaus of tall grass and bare rock cover the moors for miles

before fading into the gray mist on the eastern horizon.

The road winds through the moors and passes a few small sheep ranches that eventually give way to destroyed farmsteads, razed down to their foundations.

A. The Fork at the Ridge

The old road from Nesmé splits around a large rocky ridge. Though both roads are rough and overgrown, the northern road appears less so.

Chaver took the longer road to the north. With a successful DC 19 Survival check, a PC with Track can locate horse tracks along that road that are only a few days old. This trail can be followed all the way to the watch post at Morach Tor.

B. Abandoned Hamlet (EL 4)

The road passes through what was once a small hamlet. The shattered and weathered remains of barns and low stone fences are just rough reminders of what may have once been a pleasant place to live.

Creatures: A wounded and angry female troll rummages in the ruins of this town. She was attacked by giants and got lost on her way to Morach Tor.

Wounded Troll: hp 31 (max 60 hp, 29 points fire damage), CR 4 due to wounds; *Monster Manual* 247.

C. The Shortcut

Four miles from the fork, the northeast road curves eastward toward the abandoned village of Hethridge Drop. A smaller stone road breaks off to the north and slopes down to the edge of the swamp. This smaller road is the shortcut to Morach Tor, and winds through the marsh from one reed-covered island to another, crossing the collapsed remains of rotting wooden causeways.

D. Approaching Morach Tor

The rocky peak of Morach Tor is visible from where the shortcut across the marsh valley meets the main road, almost two miles away. As the PCs get closer, they see a watch post at the peak and might be spotted by the Khoroshen lizardfolk stationed there.

CHAPTER THREE: MORACH TOR

1. Watchpost (EL 2)

A flight of wooden stairs and a ladder lead up to a wooden platform near the peak of the tor. A much longer staircase leads down the slope to a group of buildings rising out of the foggy marsh.

As they approach, the PCs see three lizardfolk carrying clubs and javelins emerge from a small building in the settlement below. They move along a wooden walkway for a few steps before jumping off into the swamp, swimming quickly north.

Creatures: This watch post contains two lizardfolk. They are members of a group of Khoroshen calling themselves the Viperkin, after the snake-embossed shields they carry. All of the Viperkin at Morach Tor are loyal to Uhndek and know about his plans to lead the trolls. They are unwilling to talk, directing the PCs to Uhndek if they have any questions. The Viperkin and most of the Khoroshen speak only Draconic.

As soon as the Viperkin notice the PCs (Spot +10), they shout to let Uhndek know that they have visitors. If attacked, unsuccessfully intimidated, or threatened with physical harm, the Viperkin fight back while yelling warnings to Uhndek.

All of the Viperkin carry two *goodberries* each, given to them by Uhndek. The magic of these berries lasts for two days after the PCs arrive at Morach Tor.

Lizardfolk (2): hp 11 each; *Monster Manual* 169.

2. Walkway (EL 6)

The few remaining buildings of Morach Tor rise above the marsh on stilts and are connected by a series of wooden walkways. A few sections have collapsed into the water, and the far end slopes down into the swamp. The remains of submerged, roofless buildings are visible beyond.

Damp fog and years of rain have covered the planks and supports with slippery algae. The DC of Balance and Tumble checks increases by 2 on the walkways, and a DC 7 Balance check is required to run or charge. The marshland below and around the walkways is a deep bog (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 88). Climbing out of the bog onto the walkway is a full-round action that requires a DC 15 Climb check and provokes attacks of opportunity. The entire settlement is covered in thin fog.

Creatures: When he hears the call from the watch post, the Khoroshen druid Uhndek uses his rune of *barkskin* (included in his stat block) and emerges from the building at area **3** to greet the PCs on the walkway. During the day, three Viperkin are also on the walkway. At night, one Viperkin patrols the walkway while the other two rest in area **5**.

Uhndek is a short, stocky lizardfolk. He is protected by well-made crocodile-hide armor. He wears a thong necklace strung with giant crocodile teeth carved with runes, and his crocodile companion, Dross, lounges in the swamp just below the walkway. Uhndek's spear is called *Semuanya's Fang*. Generations of Khoroshen druids have strung it with finger bones from a variety of humanoid creatures and carved hundreds of runes into its shaft.

Uhndek plans to personally lead the troll attack on Nesmé and has instructed many small bands of trolls to meet him at Morach Tor. He's gained the support of Thaalis, the tribal priestess, by promising her many sacrifices for Kheshebik, the giant crocodile kept at Baeniff Tor. He's sincerely eager for news from Nesmé, as he wants to make sure the situation hasn't changed.

Uhndek CR 5
Male lizardfolk druid 4
NE Medium humanoid (reptilian)
Monster Manual 169
Init –1; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Common, Draconic, Druidic, Giant
AC 20, touch 9, flat-footed 20
hp 36 (6 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7
Spd 20 ft.

Melee +1 *spear* +7 (1d8+4/x3) and bite +4 (1d4+1) or 2 claws +6 (1d4+2) and bite +4 (1d4+1)
Ranged javelin +3 (1d6)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +6
Druid Spells Prepared (CL 4, melee touch +6, ranged touch +3)
2nd—*animal messenger, barkskin, bull's strength, flaming sphere* (DC 14)
1st—*cure light wounds, entangle* (DC 13), *faerie fire, obscuring mist*
0—*cure minor wounds, guidance, light, mending, resistance*

Abilities Str 15, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 13
SQ hold breath, resist nature's lure, spontaneous casting (*summon nature's ally* spells), trackless step, wild empathy +4, woodland stride
Feats Inscribe Rune (*Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* 36), Multiattack, Persuasive
Skills Bluff +3, Concentration +10, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (nature) +14, Survival +13 (+15 aboveground natural environments), Swim +5
Possessions +1 *hide armor*, +1 *spear*, 3 javelins, *cloak of resistance +1*, crocodile teeth with runes of *barkskin, cure light wounds, resist energy*, and *lesser restoration* on sinew necklace, 4 *goodberries*, key to chest in area **3**

Dross, crocodile animal companion: hp 22, *Monster Manual* 271.

Lizardfolk (3): hp 11 each; *Monster Manual* 169.

Development: If the PCs ask Uhndek about Chaver, he says that the man spent the night at Morach Tor a few days ago, then headed back toward Nesmé. If the PCs ask about the lizardfolk who were leaving when they arrived, he says they were going to Baeniff Tor, where the tribe is performing a ritual in praise of their god, Semuanya. If the PCs ask for help searching for Chaver, Uhndek promises to send out his other soldiers as soon as they return from Baeniff Tor.

If it is late in the day, Uhndek invites the PCs to spend the night in area **4**. If he catches them searching other areas of the settlement, he warns them to stay in area **4** for their own safety. Uhndek and his warriors attack any PCs caught snooping, heading towards Baeniff Tor, or intimidating other lizardfolk. If the party doesn't leave promptly the next morning, Uhndek and his warriors attempt to capture them rather than risk having them present when the trolls arrive.

The Viperkin fight to the death, bull rushing PCs off of the walkway into the swamp, where Uhndek's crocodile companion waits to attack them. Uhndek hangs back and uses his spells after casting *bull's strength* on Dross. The Viperkin in area **1** hear any fighting and arrive at the bottom of the stairs after three rounds. If any of the PCs uses electricity, the shocker lizard in area **5** jumps through a window and attacks them.

If the fight goes badly for Uhndek, he casts *obscuring mist* to cover his escape and hides in the swamp, swimming back to Morach Tor later to meet the gathering trolls. If the PCs are defeated, the Khoroshen stabilize any that are dying using spells and *goodberries*, then bind them with woven reeds (Escape Artist DC 26) and carry them on Grimham's raft to area **8** at Baeniff Tor.

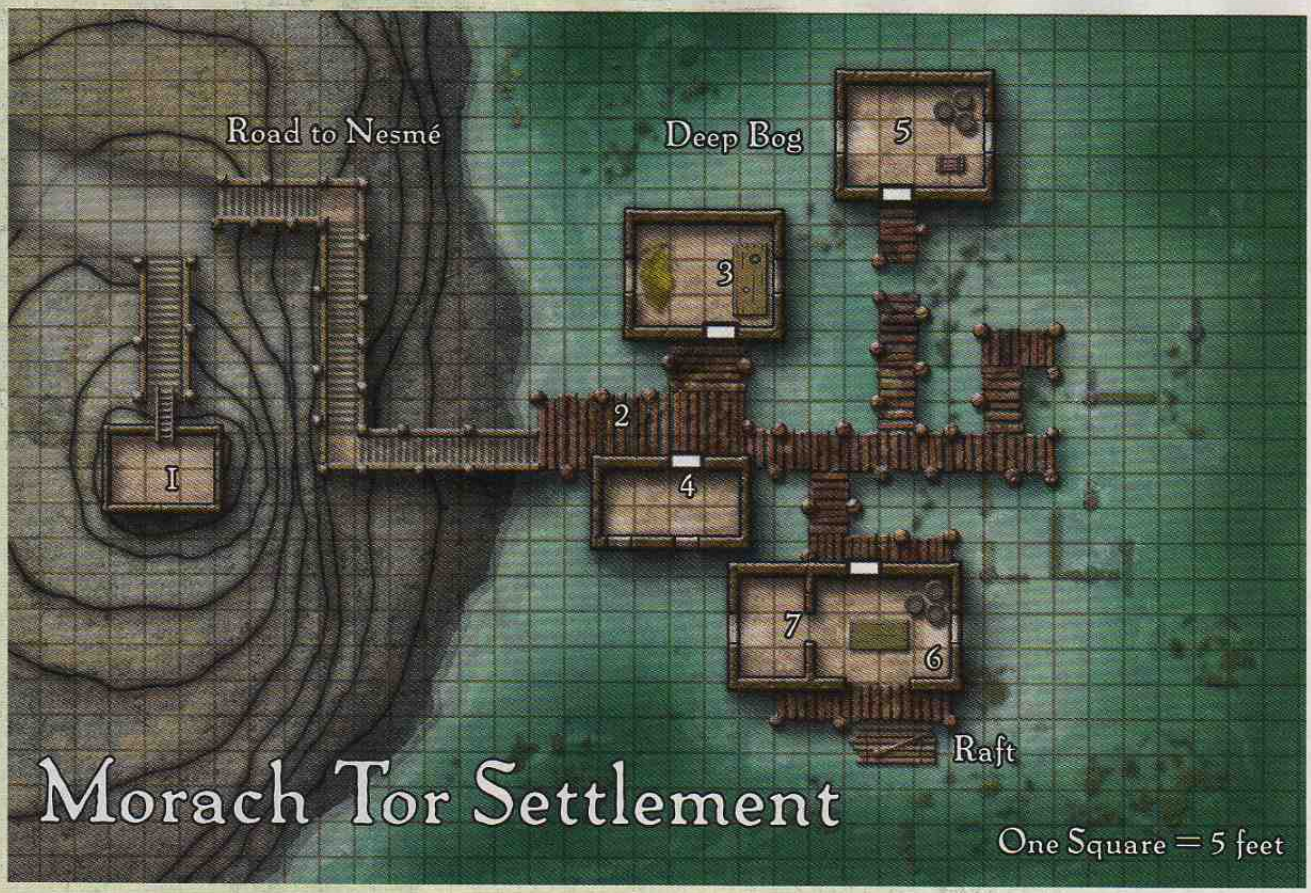
3. Uhndek's Quarters

This building's roof is patched but solid. Fresh, muddy marsh plants are piled in one corner, and a lantern hangs from a peg in the eastern wall, just above a sturdy wooden table. A large birdcage dangles from the ceiling, and the room smells of fish and burning oil.

This is where Uhndek sleeps and plans. If he is not out on the walkway, he is in here. Thin leather maps on the table chart this region of the Evermoors, and the birdcage contains three large black ravens. A successful DC 12 Handle Animal or Knowledge (nature) check reveals that they are a breed used as messengers. A message or item weighing a few ounces can be attached to the leg of one of these birds, which delivers it directly to Nesmé in just over an hour.

Treasure: A locked wooden chest in the southwest corner contains 220 gp that Tessarin paid the Khoroshen. It also contains a gold bracelet worth 40 gp and a silver moonstone ring worth 80 gp. If

Miniature Market
Lowest Prices on the Net
All items 10-30% off SRP
OVER 5,000 ITEMS IN STOCK FROM...
Reaper
Wizards of the Coast
Rackham
Goodman Games
Mega Miniatures
Dark Age Games
Warmachine
Magnificent Egos
AV Vallejo
Crystal Caste
Log on now - Find out why thousands of people are shopping exclusively on our site!
Free Shipping on orders over $75!
All orders ship out with in 24 hours (all inventory in stock, ready to ship)
Miniature Market
Lowest Prices on the Net
www.miniaturemarket.com



anyone examines the ring closely, they notice the initials "CT" scratched on the inside of the band.

Heavy Wooden Chest: Hardness 5; hp 10; Break DC 15; Open Lock DC 26.

4. Near Barracks

Reeds and fresh mud cover the floor of this room, and the roof is open to the sky in places. Broken javelins and two clubs with loosely lashed heads stand in one corner.

Khoroshen warriors live in this building, though all of its residents are currently at Baeniff Tor. The Khoroshen also kept Chaver here after his capture. A successful DC 15 Search check reveals a series of bloody scratches low on the eastern wall behind some reeds, making the letters "CT" and "BT." An arrow points from CT" to "BT." Chaver scratched them with his fingernails while he was tied up, after overhearing his guards discussing moving him to Baeniff Tor.

5. Far Barracks (EL 2)

This room has one small window in each wall, and its floor tilts down into a few inches of water to the north. Three leather bags lie among the muddy mess on the floor, and the dessicated head of a small crocodile hangs above the western window.

This is where most of the lizardfolk warriors rest when they're not out patrolling the swamp. The warriors keep a pet shocker lizard here, and it views this place as its home. If the PCs enter the building without a lizardfolk escort, the shocker lizard attacks. At night, two of the Viperkin from area 2 rest here.

Shocker Lizard: hp 14; *Monster Manual* 224.

Treasure: The leather bags contain dried fish, 12 torches, and 76 gp.

6. Larder

Just outside the doorway of this building is a wooden landing stacked with large leather sacks. The inside of the building also contains large bags, as well as a bloody wooden table in the center of the room. A few pieces of a large animal hang from the ceiling. Most of the southern wall is open to a wooden dock that runs alongside the building, and a crude raft is docked beside it. A patchwork curtain covers the entrance to another room to the west.

The meat hanging from the ceiling is from Chaver's horse. If the PCs make any noise in this room or open the curtain to area 7, they attract the attention of Grimham.

7. Grimham's Room

Pebbles cover the floor of this small room. The single window on the western wall has been boarded over.

Creatures: A svirfneblin named Grimham lives here in the dark. He was captured by the Khoroshen after wandering up into Baeniff Tor from the Underdark, and sleeps during most

of the day before preparing food for the Khoroshen at night. He is allowed to go out on his raft to gather food and has learned his way around the swamp. Grimham stays and serves the Khoroshen because he knows no other way to return to the Underdark except through Baeniff Tor.

Grimham: AC 16 (no armor); hp 7; kukri +1 (1d4/18–20); *Monster Manual* 132.

Development: If the PCs defeat all the lizardfolk at Morach Tor or change Grimham's attitude from unfriendly to friendly, he tells them that the Khoroshen made him take Chaver to Baeniff Tor on his raft. If they promise to help him get back to the Underdark, he agrees to guide them to Baeniff Tor.

CHAPTER FOUR: BAENIFF TOR

Flowing water carved the natural caverns of Baeniff Tor on its way down into the Underdark. The ceilings of these caverns are 10 to 20 feet high and thick with stalactites.

Mineshafts: Ancient miners dug slanting mineshafts to reach caverns at different levels. A typical mineshaft is 5 feet wide and 6 feet high.

Water: Water constantly flows into the mines through area 4 and makes its way to area 7, then down to area 10 and into the Underdark. Any areas designated as flowing water are rough flowing water (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 92). The constant sounds of water rushing and falling throughout the mines increases the DC of any Listen checks by 5.

Light: Lizardfolk need light to see, so at Baeniff Tor they cultivate colonies of a tiny cousin of the fire beetle. Thousands of them cling to the damp ceilings of the mineshafts and caverns, providing shadowy illumination unless otherwise noted. Damaging spells destroy all the beetles within their area of effect.

1. Swamp Approach

The swamp ends abruptly against the high, rocky cliffs on the southeast side of Baeniff Tor. A dry, wide cave slopes up into the hill.

If the PCs approach Baeniff Tor on foot, they arrive on the dry patch of ground to the south of the cave and must cross 40 feet of deep bog to reach it. If the PCs arrive by raft, they can punt right up to the entrance. If Grimham is with the PCs, he stays outside until the way to the Underdark is clear. Any PC who succeeds on a DC 16 Spot check notices the water entrance at area 4. PCs approaching the cave may be spotted by the Viperkin in area 2.

Uhndek

2. Cave Entrance (EL 4)

Creatures: Four Viperkin lizardfolk keep watch over this entrance. When they spot the PCs they raise an alarm, prompting the two lizardfolk in area 3 to investigate before running to warn the others. If the PCs get within 20 feet of the entrance, the Viperkin attack with javelins.

Lizardfolk (4): hp 11 each; *Monster Manual* 169.

3. Dry Cavern (EL 2)

Damp sacks, fish spitted on javelins, and two small wooden kegs are scattered about the floor of this cavern.

This is where most of the lizardfolk that come to Baeniff Tor sleep and store their supplies. Two lizardfolk rest here. If they see the PCs, they run to warn the lizardfolk farther in. The bags contain insects and small amphibians from the swamps, and the kegs contain 6 gallons of ale that went bad years ago. 12 javelins sit on the floor.

Lizardfolk (2): hp 9 each; *Monster Manual* 169.

4. Water Entrance

The PCs can enter Baeniff Tor through this mineshaft instead of through area 2. The shaft is completely filled with water flowing down to area 5.

5. Audience Cavern (EL varies)

Murky, chest-high water fills most of this large cavern, except for a small raised area to the north. A dry tunnel slopes up to the south, while submerged mineshafts exit to the east and west.

Creatures: After they watch Chaver go down the whirlpool in area 7, most of the lizardfolk return to this chamber. Each lizardfolk only fights if it is trapped and can't get past the PCs back to the swamp.

Lizardfolk (8): hp 9 each; *Monster Manual* 169.

6. Flooded Cavern

This cavern is flooded to the ceiling and is completely dark.

7. SACRIFICE CHAMBER (EL 5)

Water flows into this natural cavern from the north, covering the eastern half and draining through a small whirlpool to the southeast. A dry patch of higher ground to the west contains a short section of an ancient stone column, which appears to be on fire. The walls near the column are decorated with hanging jewelry and a suit of armor.

This is the chamber where Thaalis sacrifices her victims to Kheshebik, the giant crocodile the lizardfolk worship as an avatar of Semuanya. The Khoroshen bind the sacrifices with reeds and throw them into the whirlpool, which drains into area **10**. A previous priest of Semuanya cast *continual flame* on the stone column.

Creatures: If the PCs enter this chamber unannounced, two Viperkin stand in the water 10 feet west of the whirlpool and Thaalis stands on the burning column, chanting praise to Semuanya. If Thaalis has been warned of the PCs' approach, she instead hides with the Viperkin just around the corner in the dry area. She has cast *magic fang* on herself and drunk her *potion of resist energy (electricity) 10*.

Thaalis wears armor made from the skin of previous Kheshebik crocodiles, reinforced with bits of plate and chainmail. Her exposed scales are green and yellow, and many of them are pierced from underneath by crocodile teeth, creating spikes all over her body. The tip of her tail is missing, and she has a large scar on the left side of her face. Her club has a fine steel head and its shaft is covered with crocodile vertebrae.

THAALIS CR 4

Female lizardfolk cleric 3 (Semuanya)
NE Medium humanoid (reptilian)
Monster Manual 169
Init –1; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +3
Language Draconic

AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17
hp 36 (5 HD)
Fort +5, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk club +7 (1d6+4) and bite +4 (1d4+1) or 2 claws +6 (1d4+3) and bite +2 (1d4+1)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +6
Special Atks rebuke undead 5/day (+2, 2d6+5), rebuke reptiles and snakes 5/day (+2, 2d6+5)
Combat Gear *potion of magic fang*, *potion of resist energy (electricity) 10*
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 3)
2nd—*hold animal*[D] (DC 14), *sound burst* (DC 14), *spiritual weapon*
1st—*bless*, *comprehend languages*, *cure light wounds*, *magic fang*[D]
0—*cure minor wounds*, *detect magic*, *light* (×2)
D Domain Spell; **Domains** Animal, Scalykind
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd)
1/day—*speak with animals*

Abilities Str 17, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 14

SQ hold breath, spontaneous casting (inflict spells)
Feats Brew Potion, Multiattack
Skills Balance +3, Concentration +7, Jump +12, Listen +4, Spot +3, Swim +12
Possessions combat gear, masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork club, coral-handled masterwork dagger worth 400 gp, *ring of counterspells* containing *hold person*

Lizardfolk (2): hp 11 each; *Monster Manual* 169.

Tactics: The Viperkin attack with javelins as soon as they see or hear the PCs. Thaalis moves into the water for cover and casts *sound burst*, followed by *spiritual weapon*. If the battle goes poorly, Thaalis jumps down the whirlpool into area **10B**, likly taking no damage due to her Jump skill, and casts *hold animal* on Kheshebik, releasing the crocodile to attack pursuing PCs once she reaches area **11**.

Treasure: The items hanging from the wall of the cave belonged to sacrificial victims and include a gold comb worth 350 gp, a necklace of rose quartz worth 1,100 gp, a suit of Small masterwork full plate armor, and Chaver's silver belt buckle, worth 150 gp.

8. Holding Area

The western wall of this small cavern contains metal spikes driven into cracks to hold metal rings in place. Ropes and braided reeds hang from some of these rings. The smell of waste and death is strong.

This is the cavern where the Lizardfolk kept Chaver until he was thrown into the whirlpool in area **7**. A pile of Chaver's less-valuable belongings sits along one wall, including a bloody leather vest and a tiny painting of his young daughter inside a silver locket worth 30 gp.

9. Thaalis's Chamber

Mineshafts from the west and south slope up to this small, dry cavern. A small mat of woven reeds is the cave's only furnishing.

This austere chamber is where Thaalis meditates and prepares herself before sacrifices. A narrow passage to the south slants down to Kheshebik's lair.

10. Kheshebik's Lair (EL 4)

Water pours through a hole in the high ceiling at the western end of this large, round cavern, flooding all but a small patch of ground to the east. A mineshaft slopes up out of the room to the north, and two narrow passages exit to the south.

This cavern, where Kheshebik has spent his entire life, is completely dark and filled with the sound of splashing water. Any creature falling through the whirlpool hole in the ceiling drops 20 feet to land at location **10B**, but takes damage as if they fell only 10 feet because of the shallow water. The passage to the southwest is filled with water flowing downwards, and creatures failing three successive swim checks are sucked in, eventually ending up in an Underdark

lake. The passage to the north leads back up into Thaalis's chamber.

The Khoroshen have covered a 10-foot stretch of the mineshaft to the north with caltrops to discourage Kheshebik from leaving. Any PC that succeeds on a DC 20 Spot check notices the caltrops before stepping on them.

Creature: If the giant crocodile is not held by Thaalis, it splashes around in frustration near the tunnel leading to area **11**. If it notices the PCs, it attacks immediately.

Kheshebik, giant crocodile: hp 62, *Monster Manual* 271. Kheshebik is blind, but he knows the feel of the water and the sounds in his cavern so well that he effectively has tremorsense and the Blind-Fight feat.

11. Chaver's Hiding Place (EL 4)

Chaver (male LG human expert 1/warrior 2, 12 hp [currently 3], speaks Draconic) cowers against the wall here, still bound with reeds and wounded by Kheshebik's tail. He is overjoyed to see the PCs. As soon as he's untied, he grabs the closest PC by the shoulders and begins shouting.

"We have to get word to Nesmé," he says, starting to shake. "The Khoroshen are leading a troll army against the town! They could already be on their way."

Ad-Hoc XP Award: If the PCs return Chaver's ring and locket to him, give them a CR 2 experience award. If they escort Grimham this far, he thanks them and swims off into the Underdark, earning the PCs an additional CR 2 award.

Return to Morach Tor

The fastest route back to Nesmé takes the party past Morach Tor, where they find the base of the tor packed with more than sixty trolls. If Uhndek escaped, he is up on the watch post issuing commands. Whether Uhndek is there to command them or not, the troll army lumbers out onto the moors as the PCs draw near.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The troll army follows the long road to Nesmé. If the PCs hurry and take the shortcut through the lowlands, they can make it back before the meandering trolls in sufficient time to warn the town. Alternately, if they investigate the emptied Morach Tor, they have the option of sending a warning via one of the ravens in area **3**.

If warned by the PCs, Nesmé is able to muster its riders and defend itself adequately, though Lady Tessarin is quick to accept the party's aid, in which case you should consider adding a wall-top encounter with a troll (or Uhndek, if he escaped earlier).

If the town survives and the PCs save Chaver, Tessarin pays them as promised, adding an additional 1,000 gp bonus each for the advance warning about the trolls, as well as an offer to make them Riders of Nesmé. She needs more soldiers as she faces the daunting task of reclaiming the moors, and she may have a new enemy in the remaining Khoroshen. Tessarin is also happy to recommend the PCs to High Lady Alustriel of Silverymoon for service in the Argent Legion.

Russ had fun reviewing parts of this adventure with non-D&D players at a local Wisconsin writer's workshop—"Now this is for what magazine, again?" He'd like to thank his playtesters, Alex, Andy, Justin, Darryl, Eric, and Stuart.

Scaling the Adventure

"The Muster of Morach Tor" is designed for a group of four 4th-level characters. If necessary, you can adjust the adventure for a higher- or lower-level group as described below. Be sure to adjust experience and treasure appropriately.

2nd–3rd-level parties: Halve the number of Viperkin. Uhndek is only a level 2 druid with a Medium viper animal companion. Thaalis becomes a level 2 cleric.

5th–level parties: Add several wandering troll encounters and give all Viperkin a level of fighter. Uhndek gains 3 levels of druid and has a giant crocodile as a companion. Thaalis gains 3 levels of cleric and Kheshebik becomes a five-headed hydra.

THE PORTENT

by Peter Bergting

WWW.THEPORTENT.COM

Savage Tide

The Lightless Depths

Deep beneath the Isle of Dread, in a place forgotten by the world of light, an ancient, unfathomable evil festers. Within the desiccated ruin known as Golismorga, the debased kopru servants of Demogorgon work foul rites, steeping immature *shadow pearls* in pits of liquid insanity. None from the world above have yet fathomed what terrors lurk beneath the Isle of Dread, nor what mad scheme roils to profane life deep within the city's gangrenous corpse.

"The Lightless Depths" is the sixth chapter of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, a complete campaign consisting of 12 adventures appearing in DUNGEON magazine. For additional aid in running this campaign, check out DRAGON magazine's monthly "Savage Tidings" articles, a series that helps players and DMs prepare for and expand upon the campaign. DRAGON #353 features ways to improve the PCs' vessel, the *Sea Wyvern*, as they take their adventures back to the seas.

The PCs should be 11th level when they begin "The Lightless Depths." They should gain enough experience to advance to 12th by the time they reach Golismorga, and to 13th by the end of the adventure.

BY F. WESLEY SCHNEIDER AND JAMES LAFOND SUTTER
BY BEN WOOTTEN AND WARREN MAHY
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

ADVENTURE PATH | MID LEVEL (6TH–12TH) | UNDERDARK AND DUNGEON CRAWL

Switching Sides

If the PCs have teamed up with Rowyn and the Lotus Dragons, they should by now have firm control over the colony of Farshore. From this point on in the Savage Tide Adventure Path, things quickly begin to change focus as the true depth of peril facing the world becomes clear. Demogorgon's plot to trigger dozens of savage tides endangers the Vanderborens, the Lotus Dragons, and everyone in between equally.

In this case, the rest of this campaign becomes one of "fight fire with fire." Do your best to portray the evil and chaos of Demogorgon's savage tide as something that only society's misfits and outcasts can hope to prevail against, and you'll give your PCs the feeling that their choices were part of the campaign all along.

Adventure Background

Ages ago, the Olman empire spanned vast reaches of the Vohoun Ocean and the continents to either side. Perhaps their greatest achievement was the city of Thanaclan, a masterpiece of lakes and stone ziggurats built high on a remote island's central mesa. They were a wise and powerful people, with abilities far beyond their current descendants.

Yet even before the Olmans arrived, the island was home to an empire older and greater than their own. Far below the surface, in dark places unseen by human eyes, a submerged menace woke to their presence. In the city of Golismorga, the aboleth took affront to the human encroachment above, and sent an enslaved army up through the tunnels and waterways into the heart of Thanaclan itself. Contact, when it came, was swift and bloody, but though the Olmans were initially taken by surprise, they were not defeated. Fighting for their lives, every man and child took up arms against waves of skum that emerged from below, staunching the flow wherever it emerged.

For all their resilience, the Olman leaders knew that they couldn't hold out forever. Unlike the aboleths, with their seemingly inexhaustible supply of enslaved shock troops harvested from the depths below the isle, the Olmans needed time to harvest, hunt, and replenish their numbers. A war of attrition was one they would eventually lose. To prevent this, they gathered their most powerful spellcasters and set them to work creating a weapon capable of ending the assault in a single decisive blow. After weeks of frantic research, they created something they could use against their inscrutable enemies—*Tlaloc's Tear*.

Their creation came not a moment too soon. The Olmans gathered a group of their finest warriors and priests and sent them with *Tlaloc's Tear* into alien Golismorga, where the wrath of the rain god would drive from the aboleth city the one thing they could not live without—water. All knew it to be a suicide mission, and the ferocity of this final push surprised the aboleths long enough for the few surviving Olmans to reach the submerged city and trigger the *Tear*. In an instant, the device tore a hole between the Material Plane and the Olman afterlife, releasing the raw energy of centuries of angry spirits and infusing them with Tlaloc's wrath. The resulting explosion pushed all the water from the city, laying waste to buildings and aboleth alike. When the wave reached its apex it froze, holding back the sea and leaving Golismorga bone-dry. The surviving aboleth, helpless outside of their element and unwilling to further test the limits of the rain god's power, abandoned Golismorga and returned to the depths of the sea.

Over the centuries, the surface world forgot the slumbering menace. Stories of the great aboleth war were superceded by legends of the island's savage transformation as an entirely separate catastrophe struck Thanaclan. In the silent subterranean city, the koprus of the surrounding ocean moved in and capitalized on the aboleth's misfortune, attempting with limited success to extract the city's alien secrets for their own aggrandizement. Now, after centuries of failed attempts to contact the unknowable aboleth patrons, entities known as the Elder Evils, the koprus have finally made progress, thanks to the patronage of Demogorgon. Through them, the demon prince can harness the power of the Elder Evils, using it to fortify and strengthen his seeds of destruction.

Adventure Synopsis

After learning that the Crimson Fleet has been purchasing *shadow pearls* from troglodytes on the north shore of the Isle of Dread, the PCs venture forth to put an end to the *shadow pearl* production. Upon arriving, they discover that the troglodytes are merely a front for more sinister subterranean forces. Venturing below with the help of a reluctant troglodyte guide, the characters pass through the ancient Olman ward known as the Cerulean Curtain, designed to hold back the water that would release the aboleths from hibernation. From there, the party takes its ease in a town of inbred mongrelfolk before journeying farther, making their first contact with an aboleth in a long-forgotten Olman temple. Imprisoned by the kopru in a pool of conjured water, this aboleth informs them that the only way to stop the *shadow pearl* operation is to destroy the Cerulean Curtain, flooding Golismorga and freeing the aboleth to take revenge on their usurpers. To do so the party must push further, into the very heart of the enemy city. There, they must distract the kopru guardians by destroying *Tlaloc's Tear*, flooding the city and allowing them to assault the kopru leader at the seat of his power.

Adventure Hooks

Working off of intelligence gained from ship logs and pirates captured in the final attack on the colony, the PCs learn that the Crimson Fleet has been buying *shadow pearls* from a mysterious group called the "Lords of Dread." This group is located in a secluded bay on the north shore of the island. Naturally concerned about the threat of these artifacts, Lavinia urges the PCs to contact these "Lords of Dread," determine their role in the production of the *shadow pearls*, and, if possible, end the production of the dangerous weapons once and for all.

If you're not running this adventure as part of the Savage Tide Adventure Path,

there are still several ways to involve your PCs in the action. Instead of a demonic plot, the *shadow pearls* might be part of a kopru plan to wipe the island's surface clean of sentient races, or a sacrifice necessary to gain the favor of the Elder Evils. Even if you wish to avoid the *shadow pearls* altogether, the inherent lure of a lost subterranean city filled with ancient and alien secrets might be enough to persuade PCs to venture below.

Finally, keep in mind that although this adventure appears chronologically before "City of Broken Idols" in the Savage Tide Adventure Path, there's no reason the PCs need to tackle the alien depths below the Isle of Dread before they travel to the central plateau and explore the ruins of Thanaclan. Production of the *shadow pearls* occurs at both sites, and in order to permanently shut them down, both need to be disrupted. Of course, the challenges that await the PCs in the City of Broken Idols are deadlier than those waiting for them in the aboleth ruins of Golismorga, so you should do your best to subtly encourage the PCs to head down before they head up.

PART ONE: NEGOTIATING WITH MONSTERS

Having survived the wrath of the Crimson Fleet, the people of Farshore are slowly putting their lives back together. The PCs can take this opportunity to indulge in some well-deserved rest, do some magical crafting, ingratiate themselves with the locals by helping in the colony's reconstruction, or perhaps even take on a side quest or two. DUNGEON #143 details numerous possibilities for adventure in and around the Isle of Dread, and any encounters left unused from "Tides of Dread" are a good place to start. The adventure timeline is fluid at this point; give the PCs as long as they need to settle in to life at Farshore.

In the wake of the Crimson Fleet assault, numerous rumors have spread through Farshore. The death of Lavinia Vanderboren's brother Vanthus, his involvement with the Crimson Fleet, and his demonic nature are all tales that has been told and exaggerated again and again. In the wake of these stories, some have come to question Lavinia's right to lead the people of the colony, and whispers of a hidden fiendish taint in her soul and ties to the Crimson Fleet grow stronger every week. This slander is fueled in large part by not-so-secret whispers from the Meravanchis, yet it still erodes Lavinia's (and by extension, the PCs') authority in Farshore. It isn't long before Lavinia hears the tales herself and requests the PCs join her for a morning meal.

Vanderboren Manor is one of the largest and most lavishly appointed homes in Farshore. Rivaled only by Lord Meravanchi's Estate, the whitewashed mansion's two-story height is crowned by a small dome set with stained-glass windows that depict sailing ships and fair seas. Within, much of the house remains unused, dusty gray sheets covering fine furniture and artwork in all the rooms except the kitchen, dining hall, Lavinia's quarters, and the rooms she's invited the PCs to occupy. Having taken up the reins as Farshore's leader, Lavinia has spent little time seeing to her personal affairs.

Realizing the impact the colonists' unease might have on her control over Farshore, Lavinia has no intention of letting the people dwell on fanciful conspiracies and rumored faults. To that end, she has a simple breakfast of toast, coffee, and boiled turtle eggs prepared, over which she describes her latest mission to the PCs.

"In the past hours I've discovered that Farshore wasn't the only victim of the pirates' attack—it seems that my personal reputation also took a bit of fire. The people of Farshore have seen too much panic and death under my leadership, and the appearance of the pirates and Van—," Lavinia chokes on the name, and takes a moment to steady herself before continuing, "—the pirates and my brother startled them. Now some of the colonists claim that my family is cursed, while others whisper that I somehow orchestrated the attack."

Lavinia takes a sip of her tea, then continues. "Although it aggravates me after all we've been through, I won't allow a few rumors to discourage me from my work here. Part of me even understands the people's concerns, and I'd like to do what I can to dissuade their fears. This would be where you come in."

"Along the north coast of the isle, a dragon turtle of gigantic proportions makes his home. The beast calls himself Emraag, but the locals know him as 'The Glutton.' If we're to believe the rumors, it's a miracle that any of us are sitting here

Excerpt From the Brine Harlot's Log—

We reached Gallivant Cove with no incident, although the Seventh Coil yuan-ti renewed their demands for shore leave. I denied them again, promising them all the leave they could want once my sister's little project is mine. Payment to the Glutton went smoothly (that beast's teeth would make fine trophies!), and I personally led a group of five to the caves. The trogs looked worse than they stank—some sort of malady afflicts them for certain. Lords of Dread? Hardly. Yet they took our payments and slaves readily enough.

There was only one shadow pearl ready for us. I made clear my displeasure, but the simpering lepers convinced me that they were being truthful, and promised several more in a few months' time. I've tried to avoid staring at the pearl overmuch. Its depths are hypnotic. After seeing the number one of these little beauties did on Kraken's Cove, I make sure to keep it in a padded container at all times.

It's too bad we can't just toss the thing into Farshore with a catapult and let them kill each other off, but I'll not be the one to tell command we broke another of their toys!

Directing the Adventure

By the time the PCs begin this adventure, they have become great heroes in their own right. At this point, the onus of adventure falls partially upon them; while Lavinia sends them out to investigate the "Lords of Dread," following this investigation through to the end is in the PCs' hands. The troglodyte heretic Irgzid (area **B2**) can help steer the PCs on the right path, as can the aboleth N'glothnoru in area **I**. Should the PCs resort to divination spells, you should use the results granted to encourage the exploration of Golismorga, the destruction of *Tlaloc's Tear*, and the ruin of the bilewretch in Holashner's Ziggurat.

now, as the Glutton supposedly has a taste for ships and sailors. Yet apparently the thing's vices aren't limited to swallowing down whole crews. The Crimson Fleet made a deal with the creature, bribing it to leave their ships intact on their visits to Gallivant Cove. Lord Merivanchi, however, has refused to 'negotiate with monsters'—apparently preferring that our supply ships be eaten and our people go hungry.

"Therefore, my thought to ease the concerns of the colonists is to appease the beast that's already caused them so much hardship. I'd like you to sail to the isle's northern shores and seek out Emraag the Glutton. I'll provide you with a cache of treasures to bribe the brute—a down payment on Farshore's "tribute" to him, offered for the assurance that he leaves vessels flying my family's colors be. If an agreement can be met, excellent. If not... well, I trust in your ability to conquer that arena as well.

"More to the point, there's the matter of the Crimson Fleet's interest in Gallivant Cove. According to logs and papers we've recovered from my brother's ship, the *Brine Harlot*, they've made several visits to a beach on the southern shore of the cove to meet with a group they call the 'Lords of Dread.' According to these notes, they've been purchasing large quantities of what they're calling 'shadow pearls.' I believe you've had some experience with these things before, as one of them was apparently the cause of the trouble at Kraken's Cove some months ago, just before your visit there. The thought of dozens of shadow pearls in the possession of the Crimson Fleet is chilling."

Putting her cup down, Lavinia looks to you each in turn. "I know it's dangerous, dealing with such a beast, but if you can convince Emraag to accept our offer, you might even be able to learn a few things from him. In any event, securing the dragon turtle's goodwill should allow free access to the Lords of Dread. And it'd be a huge step in turning this colony from an isolated backwater into a destination for merchants from the world over. Therefore, I ask you this not just for myself, but on behalf of all the people of Farshore. Will you help?"

After making her offer, Lavinia welcomes questions from the PCs. Some of the most likely ones follow, along with her responses.

"How much are we being paid to negotiate with a monster?" Lavinia offers each of the party members 1,000 gp, but honestly hopes that by this time, the PCs don't ask for additional payment.

"What do you plan to bribe Emraag with?" Lavinia's parents expected to eventually return to Farshore, and left a modest amount of wealth (mostly jewelry and artwork) at their manor. Lavinia wants to use this treasure—some with considerable sentimental value—to barter with the dragon turtle. She trusts the PCs not to squander or abscond with it.

"Do you know where the dragon turtle lives?" Natives have warned colonists away from the inlet where Emraag makes his lair. It's a sizable bay that became known as Gallivant Cove after an infamous ship bearing that name sank in its waters.

"How do we contact the beast once we're in the right place?" Lavinia has already bartered for a strange native instrument the colonists have dubbed a "sea skirl." These sets of long reed pipes are used by the Olmans to attract sea creatures, but also produce a strange kind of drowned music if the pipes are played underwater. Emraag should hear and respond within an hour of these pipes being sounded.

"When should we leave?" Lavinia has already made arrangements to have her bribe for Emraag collected and loaded aboard the *Sea Wyvern*. Everything should be in order for the PCs to depart as soon as the following morning.

"Why don't we just kill Emraag?" Lavinia hesitantly agrees that this would indeed be the best solution, but points out that if the dragon turtle's reputation is even half-deserved, he may well be a foe beyond the capabilities of even such great heroes as the PCs. Lavinia urges caution if the PCs seem eager to take this route.

While there's no great rush for the PCs to get their voyage north underway, Lavinia urges them to set sail as soon as the *Sea Wyvern* is properly provisioned and prepared. Soon after her discussion with the party, several workers load Emraag's bribe into the *Sea Wyvern*'s hold. This cargo consists of four large wooden chests, an impressive, 8-foot-tall statue of Ventrue Vanderboren (a famed explorer and privateer), and the sea skirl. The chests contain jewelry, coins, and waterproof artwork with a total value of 16,000 gp, with the statue worth 4,000 gp alone. After loading the bribe into the *Sea Wyvern*, one of Lavinia's workers provides the PCs with a set of brass keys to the chests before departing.

To Gallivant Cove

The journey to Gallivant Cove covers about 350 miles—assuming normal wind speed, this voyage takes the *Sea Wyvern* just under five days. The checks to set course to Gallivant Cove and to pilot the ship are low enough that, as long as the ship hugs the coast, there's no real chance of becoming lost unless no one on board has any ranks in Knowledge (geography). If no PC has this skill, the gnome Urol Forol gladly accompanies them to aid in navigation. The journey north can be as detailed or as brief as you wish. Issue #144 of DUNGEON provides a detailed wandering monster chart for the waters off the coast of the Isle of Dread. Alternately, you can use any of the following encounter ideas to liven up the journey north. Of course, parties with powerful magic or methods

of transporting large quantities of treasure (such as teleportation and *portable holes*) may be able to avoid taking the *Sea Wyvern* entirely, although this adventure assumes that they do.

Shipwreck/Ruin: Numerous shipwrecks and half-submerged Olman ruins dot the isle's treacherous coast. During their travels, the PCs spot such a ruin, either the weathered timbers of a shattered galley or eroded obsidian columns and statues jutting from the surf. If the PCs choose to investigate the remains they discover (roll 1d4): (1) 750 gp worth of supplies or ancient artifacts, (2) a pair of ghostly sailors or Olman warriors (ghost 5th-level fighters, *Monster Manual* 117), (3) unstable structures resulting in falling timbers or rock dealing 5d6 points of damage (Reflex save for half), or (4) a random minor magic weapon or wand guarded by a giant octopus (*Monster Manual* 276).

Roc: A curious roc (*Monster Manual* 215) dives low to investigate the *Sea Wyvern*. Seeing the ship's draconic figurehead alarms the gigantic bird, inciting it to make several low swoops as it puzzles out what manner of creature the *Sea Wyvern* is. The roc makes for a startling sight, but ultimately poses no threat, flying off after a minute or so. The beast only attacks if members of the crew attack it first.

Feeding Frenzy: The water churns in a bloody frenzy where a school of six great white sharks (Huge sharks, *Monster Manual* 279) fight over the carcass of a 30-foot-long giant squid. Hidden below the chaos circles a scarred old dire shark (*Monster Manual* 64), waiting for additional prey attracted to the kill. Interfering PCs make just the sort of meal the dire shark craves.

Plesiosaur: A hungry plesiosaur (*Stormwrack* 146) raises its head from the waves and attempts to grab a PC or crewman from the deck of the *Sea Wyvern*. The gigantic reptile has no interest in a prolonged fight and, upon grabbing a victim, dives underwater to drown and consume its meal.

Indulging the Glutton (EL 16)

Emraag the Glutton dwells beneath the murky waters of Gallivant Cove. The vessel that gives the bay its name is merely one of the Glutton's most recent and memorable victims. Its splintered wreck marks the entrance to Emraag's den, a deep sea cave filled with the cargo of a hundred ships and the treasure of dozens of costal Olman ruins. Emraag styles himself the lord of the seas surrounding the Isle of Dread, although his claim is largely hollow. The aboleth that dwell in the deeper waters give the Glutton a wide berth, not interfering with his endless rampage and preferring to let air-breathers believe that an arrogant dragon turtle is the greatest threat that lurks beneath the waves.

The sea skirl Lavinia loaded onto the ship along with her bribe proves the simplest method of contacting the dragon turtle. Like a long, complicated set of pan pipes or didgeridoos, one end of the sea skirl dips into the water, allowing a musician to create a variety of bubbling noises. The strange music coaxes Emraag from his lair within in 2d6 minutes. How he responds to the noise depends on the skill of the sea skirl's player. With a DC 20 Perform (wind instruments) check, the dragon turtle is intrigued by the music and his initial attitude is indifferent as he rises next to the ship to discover its source. If the check produces a lower result, Emraag is annoyed to find a noisy human ship disturbing his rest and emerges near the *Sea Wyvern* with a hostile attitude.

After attracting Emraag's attention, the PCs must negotiate with the capricious creature. In order to get Emraag to grant the *Sea Wyvern* permission to ply these waters, he must be made friendly; to secure permission from him to allow Farshore's ships unrestricted passage through his territory, he must be made helpful. If he's pleased by the sea skirl's sound when he arrives, he gives the PCs 1d3 minutes to present their case before he grows impatient, allowing one Diplomacy check per minute. If he's hostile, he only gives the PCs 1d6 rounds (remember, Diplomacy checks suffer a –10 penalty if rushed as a full-round action).

In this encounter, allow the players to present their case to the dragon turtle. The PC that does the most talking during this encounter is the one who rolls the primary Diplomacy check to influence Emraag's attitude; all other PCs may attempt to aid the primary check by making a DC 10 Diplomacy check. The PCs may attempt as many checks as they have time for. Modify the results of each check if the PCs bring up any of the topics in the sidebar above.

If made friendly, Emraag agrees to let the *Sea Wyvern* pass through Gallivant Cove for the span of a week. If made helpful, he extends this exception to all ships flying the flag of Farshore for the span of a year, with the option to extend safe passage for another year with further tribute. In either case, Emraag remains in the area long enough to entertain any questions the PCs might have for him. While he knows nothing of *shadow pearls*, the savage tide, or the Lords of Dread, he does know that the Crimson Fleet paid him a fortune in gold and exotic goods to meet with a tribe of degenerate troglodytes living near the southernmost shores of Gallivant Cove. With his directions, it's a simple matter to find this cove. Emraag's patience doesn't last forever, and a few minutes later he retires to his lair with the tribute. Any attempt to draw him to

Emraag Diplomacy Modifiers

Presenting the bribe to Emraag.	+10
Referring to the bribe as "tribute."	+5
Flattering Emraag, referring to his dominance over the area.	+4
Continuing to play the sea skirl with at least a DC 24 result.	+2
Adding tribute in addition to Lavinia's offer (per 5,000 gp value).	+1
Referring to any creature as being more powerful than Emraag.	–8
Referring to Lavinia's offer as a bribe.	–5
Continuing to play the sea skirl with a result less than DC 24.	–2
Each previous check.	–4 cumulative

the surface again annoys him, decreasing his attitude one step.

If the PCs fail to placate the Glutton, he roars in rage and blasts the *Sea Wyvern* with his breath weapon. He then submerges, only to rise again 1d3 rounds later in an attempt to capsize the *Sea Wyvern*. If the PCs escape and the dragon turtle still lives, they may have to sneak into Gallivant Cove. Emraag watches for the ship during daylight hours for the next week, immediately attacking if the PCs return. During the night and after a week's time, however, the dragon turtle grows lax and the party might slip by. Upon hearing that the PCs were unsuccessful in their mission, Lavinia is visibly disappointed with them—doubly so if they gave the dragon turtle her bribe and still failed. If the PCs managed to kill the Glutton, she gives them each a 500 gp bonus. This bonus increases to 1,000 gp if they managed to retain her family's wealth.

EMRAAG THE GLUTTON **CR 16**
Male advanced dragon turtle
NE Gargantuan dragon (aquatic)
Monster Manual 88
Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +29, Spot +29
Languages Aquan, Common, Draconic

AC 27, touch 6, flat-footed 27
hp 337 (25 HD)
Immune fire, sleep, paralysis
Fort +21, **Ref** +14, **Will** +15

Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.
Melee* bite +25 (6d6+24) and 2 claws +20 (3d8+17)
Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +25; **Grp** +51
Atk Options Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Snatch
Special Actions breath weapon (20-ft. by 25-ft. by 50-ft. cloud; 12d6 fire; DC 29), capsize (20% chance vs. *Sea Wyvern*)
*10-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 38, Dex 10, Con 25, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12
Feats Awesome Blow, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Natural Attack (bite, claw), Power Attack, Snatch
Skills Diplomacy +3, Hide +16 (+24 when submerged), Intimidate +29, Listen +29, Search +19, Sense Motive +19, Spot +29, Swim +50

Development: If the PCs defeat Emraag and seek out his treasure, you can develop his submerged lair into a memorable side-quest by populating it with a few aquatic pets the dragon turtle keeps. His treasure should be significant, worth a total of 90,000 gp, although no more than half should be in portable magic items.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs secure safe passage from Emraag, give them a CR 16 award.

PART TWO: DREAD DESCENT

After dealing with Emraag the Glutton, the PCs are free to investigate Gallivant Cove and search for the source of the Crimson Fleet's *shadow pearls*. The waters of Gallivant Cove are uniformly deep and, unless something forces the *Sea Wyvern* against the cliffs edging the bay, the party should have little trouble navigating its waters.

The journey into the caverns below the Isle of Dread is perilous, ultimately leading to the ruined aboleth city of Golismorga, nearly 2 miles below sea level. This far below the surface of the earth, the environment is strange and alien. The route from Gallivant Cove to Golismorga is shown on the map of the Underdark below the Isle of Dread. For the sake of clarity, the vertical scale of this map is distorted. Actual distances traveled between each location listed are given in the adventure text.

While their abundance of life suggests that they may once have been connected to further networks, the tunnels and caverns beneath the Isle of Dread differ considerably from the standard

Isle of Dread Underdark Encounters

Roll	Monster	Average EL	Source
01–02	1 beholder	13	*Monster Manual* 26
03–05	1 purple worm	12	*Monster Manual* 211
06–08	1 roper	12	*Monster Manual* 215
09–11	1d8 spectres	11	*Monster Manual* 232
12–13	1 retriever	11	*Monster Manual* 46
14–18	2d4 wraiths	10	*Monster Manual* 258
19–23	1 chasm spider	10	*Monster Manual* 288 (Gargantuan spider)
24–25	1 bebelith	10	*Monster Manual* 42
26–29	1d4 destrachans	10	*Monster Manual* 49
30–33	1d12 centipede swarms	9	*Monster Manual* 238
34–37	1d4 umber hulks	9	*Monster Manual* 249
38–41	1d8 blackfang rhagodessas	9	Page 53
42–46	1d4+2 troglodyte lepers	9	Page 38
47–50	1d6 hook horrors	9	Page 45
51–56	1d6 koprus	9	Page 54
57–61	1 dark naga	8	*Monster Manual* 191
62–66	1d4+1 phase spiders	8	*Monster Manual* 207
67–70	1 ghostbelly spider	8	*Monster Manual* 289 (Gargantuan spider)
71–73	1d6 cloakers	8	*Monster Manual* 36
74–76	1 black pudding	7	*Monster Manual* 201
77–82	1 pit scorpion	7	*Monster Manual* 287 (Huge scorpion)
83–86	1d6 carrion crawlers	7	*Monster Manual* 30
87–92	1 hornback centipede	6	*Monster Manual* 286 (Gargantuan centipede)
93–95	1 gibbering mouther	5	*Monster Manual* 126
96–00	1 ribbonweb spider	5	*Monster Manual* 289 (Huge spider)

Underdark environment. Missing from these caverns are most of the the classic underdark races—no drow, duergar, or mind flayers dwell under the Isle of Dread. Unless otherwise noted, floors, ceilings, and walls are all made of natural stone, carved by water and volcanic activity from the foundation of the isle itself. Other than what illumination the characters and other creatures bring with them, the passages are completely lightless.

The tunnels shown on the map represent the largest and most stable routes through the Dread Underdark. These tunnels range from ten to thirty feet in width, and are generally as tall as they are wide. Countless other routes exist, secondary passages that are rarely more than ten feet wide. These routes are untrustworthy at best, opening and closing with the Dread Underdark's tectonic shifts. If you wish to expand the encounters in this adventure, or extend the adventure into the numerous other regions hinted at on the map, the *Underdark* sourcebook provides a wealth of ideas.

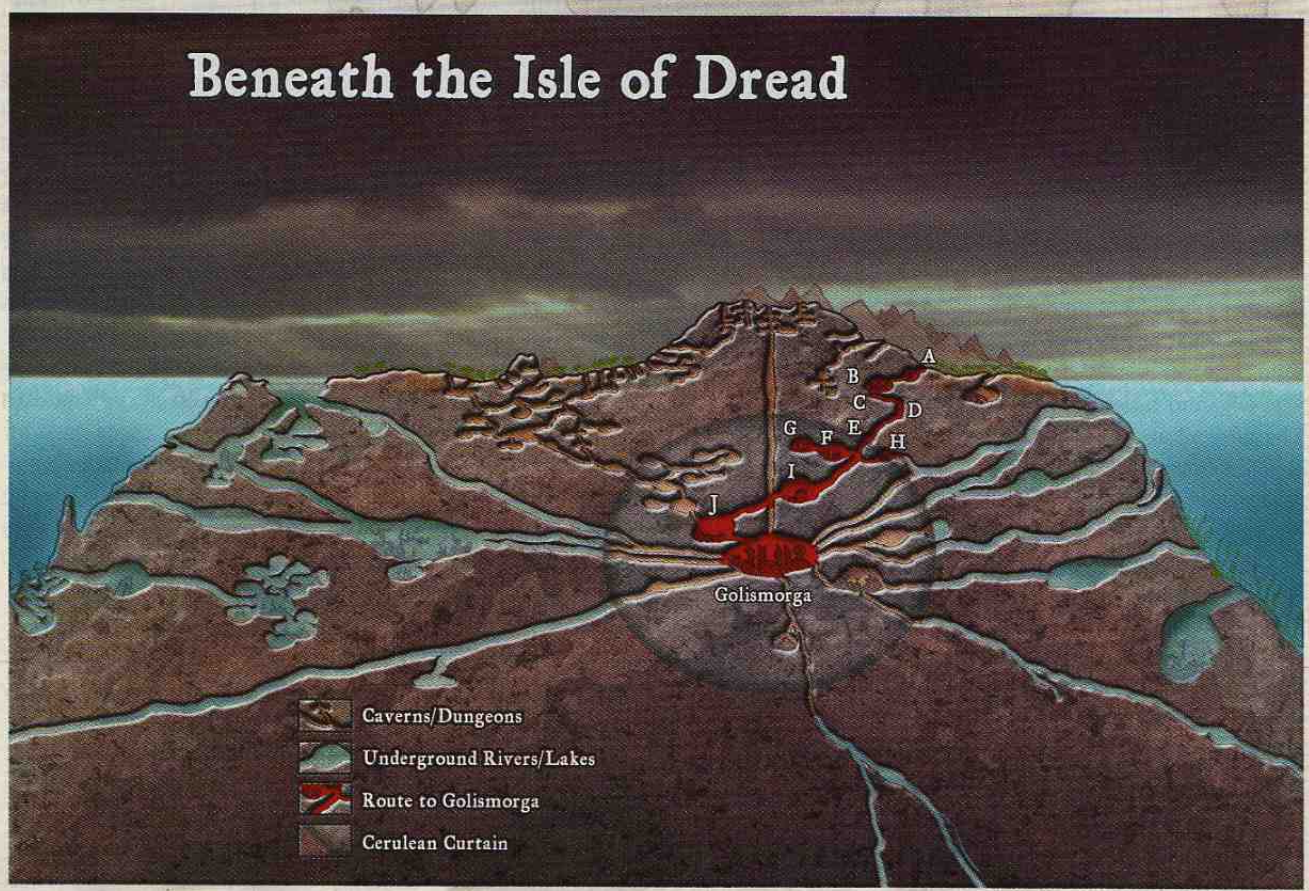
Several set encounter locations await the PCs along their journey. Check for random encounters four times a day; once at morning, once at noon, once at dusk, and once at midnight. The chance of a wandering monster encounter is 12% in the upper caverns. Inside of the Cerulean Curtain (areas E–J), the scarcity of water makes for more sparsely-populated tunnels; the chance of an encounter here is only 6%.

A: Entrance Caverns

The shores of Gallivant Cove are sheer cliffs that plunge directly into the watery depths below, yet near the bay's farthest inland point, a crude pier of rocks and yellowed bones extends from the maw of a treacherous-looking sea cave. Twin rows of hollow, yellowed skulls burn with an eerie green fire day and night, making the ramshackle dock easy to locate. This morbid pier is where the diseased troglodytes known as Laogzed's Redeemed meet every few months to deliver shipments of *shadow pearls* to the pirates of the Crimson Fleet. Vanthus Vanderboren paid these troglodytes a visit on his way to Farshore—the *shadow pearl* he tried to trigger at the end of "Tides of Dread" was the Fleet's most recent acquisition.

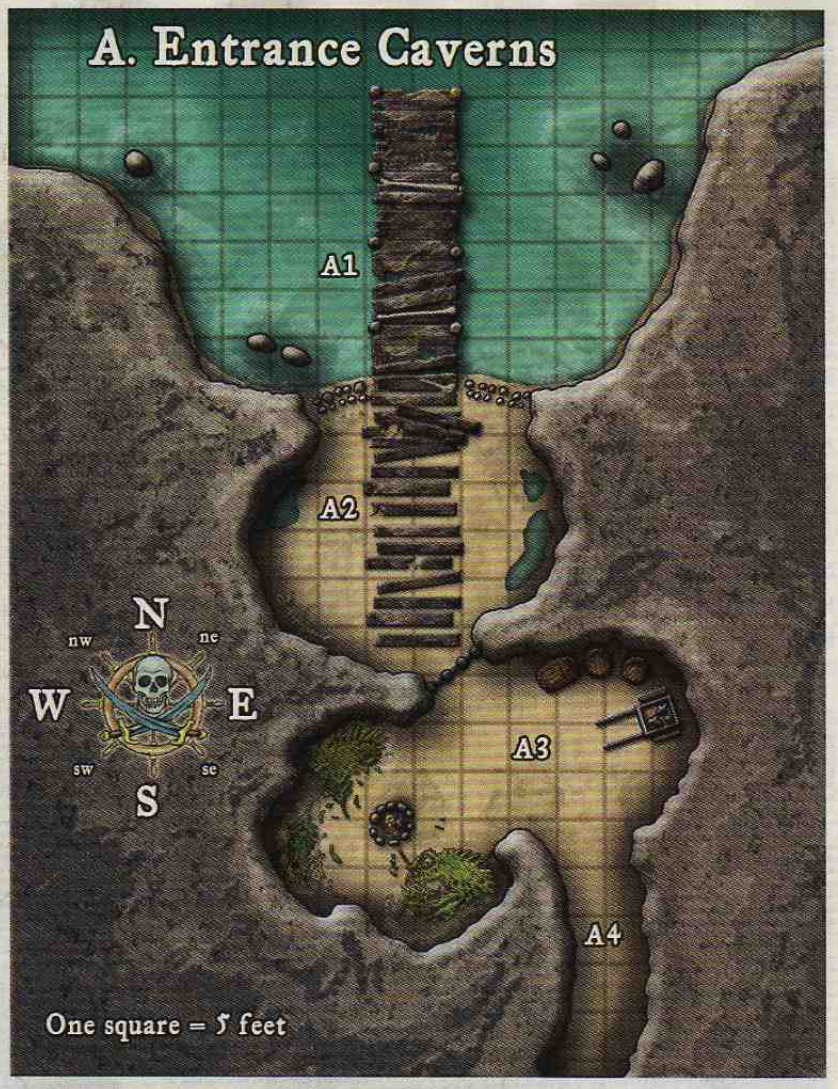
The troglodytes of Laogzed's Redeemed share one unfortunate trait—they are plague carriers. Nearly all of them suffer from a rare and hideous disease called vile rigidity. While it's actually a side effect of extended exposure to the freshly created *shadow pearls* they've been providing the Crimson Fleet pirates, the troglodytes of Laogzed's Redeemed have interpreted the plague as a blessing from their deity. They refer to it as "Laogzed's Embrace" and welcome it, piling their dead in a charnel pit at the community's center and encouraging the affliction's constant spread.

Vile rigidity at first seems like a boon. One day after failing a DC 19 Fortitude save to resist infection, the victim's skin toughens, granting him a



+1 natural armor bonus. On the second failed save, this becomes a +2 bonus. On the third failed save, the natural armor bonus improves to +3, but the victim takes a –2 penalty to Dexterity. Each day thereafter that he fails his save, the victim's skin becomes thicker, adding a cumulative +1 natural armor bonus and a –2 penalty to Dexterity. This lasts until the victim's Dexterity reaches 0, indicating that his ever-thickening flesh has entrapped him. Soon thereafter, the victim dies of suffocation.

The troglodytes have developed a foul-smelling treatment for the disease to prevent it from lingering long enough to cause suffocation. This treatment is known as *black pulp poultice* (see sidebar).



A1. Putrid Pier

Seemingly held together by brine and urchins, this rickety pier of rotted wood and gigantic bones looks as much a scavenger-picked corpse as a derelict berth. Twin rows of skulls impaled upon spears line the pier, their eye sockets flickering with otherworldly green flames and venting sickly vapors. This unnatural light illuminates an eerie path into the darkness of a yawning cave entrance fifteen feet above the surf below.

Constructed of bones and driftwood, this pier juts 30 feet into the murky green waters of Gallivant Cove. While the surf is mild, the water is 15 feet deep, forcing those who fall in to make DC 10 Swim checks. The pier's pilings rise 15 feet above the surf at high tide, requiring a DC 20 Climb check to ascend, although a slippery ladder at the end of the pier can be ascended with a DC 10 Climb check.. It's only a DC 15 Climb check to ascend the ragged cliffside from the surf up to the cave entrance above.

The spears along the pier's edges display human and troglodyte skulls. Set 10 feet apart, these morbid torches burn a mixture of rare molds, swamp plants, and the preserved musk glands of dead troglodytes. This concoction causes revolting smoke to spill from the skulls' mouths and eye sockets. Any creature within 15 feet of one of these skulls must make a DC 16 Fortitude save or be nauseated for as long as they remain in the area and 2d6 rounds thereafter. Treat this effect as an inhaled poison.

A2. Sea Cave (EL 7)

Soggy planks ascend the sloped floor of this salt-encrusted grotto. Refuse and broken crustacean shells litter several shallow pools near the walls, making easy meals for a small flock of sickly gulls roosting in the cracked walls. A ten-foot-wide opening in the southern wall has been closed off by a rusty iron gate.

A natural staging place for meetings between the Crimson Fleet and Laogzed's Redeemed (which the pirates call "canker skinks"), a DC 21 Survival check in the area by someone with the Track feat reveals a large number of footprints in this chamber, some booted (pirates), some bare (slaves given to the troglodytes as partial payment for the *shadow pearls*), and some reptilian (troglodytes).

The troglodytes built a crude grate of crooked bars to prevent intruders from wandering into their caves. While simply made, the grate is quite heavy—it's a full-round action to open or close it.

Iron Grate: 1 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 30; Break DC 25.

Creature: The troglodytes keep a guardian and pet in this room, an immense and cantankerous reptile known as a dimetrodon. The monster looks like a short-snouted, 15-foot-long lizard, but her most distinctive feature is the 8-foot-tall sail-like fin that rises from her back. Named Vethvusk (after

of one of Laogzed's many festering consorts), this dimetrodon is infected with vile rigidity—her flesh is thick and crusty, and large shingles of excess growth hang from her sail. The troglodytes treat her with *black pulp poultices* to mitigate the worst of her condition.

When she notices the PCs, Vethvusk immediately begins barking and roaring. The noise is certain to alert the troglodytes in area **A3**, who come to investigate in 1d3 rounds. Vethvusk has been trained to attack only in self-defense or if a non-troglodyte attempts to move more than 10 feet into this room. If the PCs provoke the dimetrodon, she attacks immediately, pursuing foes into the waters of Gallivant Cove for up to 200 feet before giving up and returning to her lair here. Vethvusk fights to the death once her blood is up.

VETHVUSK **CR 7**

Advanced elite dimetrodon
N Large animal
DRAGON #318 64
Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +3, Spot +18

AC 16, touch 6, flat-footed 16
hp 162 (12 HD)
Fort +16, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

Spd 10 ft., swim 10 ft.; burst of speed
Melee bite +18 (2d6+15)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +23

Abilities Str 31, Dex 5, Con 26, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6
SQ vile rigidity
Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Iron Will
Skills Listen +3, Spot +18, Swim +14

Burst of Speed (Ex) Up to three times per hour, Vethvusk can increase her land speed to 60 feet for one round as a free action. During this round, she gains a +2 dodge bonus to her armor class.

Vile Rigidity (Ex) Vethvusk suffers from vile rigidity; her toughened skin improves her natural armor bonus by +3, but penalizes her Dexterity by –2. Daily applications of *black pulp poultices* stave off further developments of her sickness. A *remove disease* spell removes the adjustments to her natural armor and Dexterity, adjusting her AC to 14.

Development: As Vanthus has just recently picked up the latest *shadow pearl* from the troglodytes, they aren't expecting a visit from the Crimson Fleet for some time. Nevertheless, the sheltered troglodytes have great difficulty telling one fleshy humanoid from another, and unless the PCs immediately attack them, they are likely to mistake the party for agents of the Crimson Fleet. Assuming the PCs haven't attacked the dimetrodon by the time the troglodytes arrive to investigate her barking, the lead troglodyte approaches and rasps a greeting in Common: "May Laogzed gnaw you slowly." Their initial attitude is indifferent—they view their interactions with the Crimson Fleet as a necessary evil in spreading the influence of their deity by trading *shadow pearls* for slaves and treasure.

The reptilian savages snarl and complain about the PCs' unusually early arrival, pointing out that they've just handed over their latest *shadow pearl* and that more aren't expected to be ready for months. As long as the PCs don't reveal their true identities (such as by making a poor Bluff check), the troglodytes remain relatively calm, but once they realize something strange is going on they retreat to area **A3** to prepare a defense.

If the PCs manage to converse with the troglodytes on civil terms, they can draw out some information from the dim-witted creatures. The troglodytes have been trading *shadow pearls* to the pirates for nearly two years now, in exchange for large numbers of slaves and shipments of drugs and trinkets. If asked about these payments, the troglodytes admit that while they get to keep all the drugs and trinkets, they are only allowed to keep a few slaves as sacrifices. The bulk of these slaves are led deep below, to be given to the Lords of Dread in return for more of the *shadow pearls* at a meeting place called the Temple of the Ancient Ones. Asking too many questions eventually makes the troglodytes suspicious, leading them to question the PCs in return and possibly attack.

Black Pulp Poultice

Concocted from rare and near-poisonous molds found under the Isle of Dread, the preparation of *black pulp poultice* requires stewing the fungus within the body of a disease-ravaged corpse. Any creature that applies a warm layer of this stinking black glop to the neck and chest halts the progress of any nonmagical disease for 24 hours. The poultice allows the subject to skip the required saving throw against the disease for the day that the treatment is in effect. During this period, the subject accrues no further ability damage from the disease. A skipped saving throw counts as neither a success nor a failure for the purpose of recovery from the disease. Furthermore, the incubation period of any disease to which the subject is exposed during the *black pulp poultice's* duration does not begin until the remedy expires.

Faint conjuration (healing); CL 2nd; Prerequisite Brew Potion, *delay disease* (*Spell Compendium* 63); Market Price 50 gp; Weight —.

Of course, the pirates know better than to attack the troglodyte's dimetrodon guard—if the PCs have killed Vethvusk, any troglodytes that respond to the sound of combat and find the PCs quickly realize that they're not members of the Crimson Fleet. They retreat to area **A3** to prepare a defense of the caves.

A3. Emissaries' Den (EL 8)

The stench of waste and decay lingers in the briny air. Two alcoves form this claustrophobic grotto. To the north, three piles of matted and moldering palm fronds cluster around a mound of ash and dying embers. Opposite them rest several misshapen clay jars, a rack on which hang dead octopi and cave lizards, and a rickety cart filled with large black rocks that glisten wetly. A low passage in the western wall descends steeply into darkness.

Creatures: Four troglodyte lepers linger here, guarding the entrance to the lower caverns and patiently awaiting the next scheduled visit from the Crimson

Bilestone

Known in most rare texts as "The Hunger Below," Holashner is one of the Elder Evils, an ancient and powerful entity that existed before the dawn of the Material Plane. Holashner burrows constantly through the depths of the earth, eating magma, creatures, stone, and anything else in its path. The material it leaves behind is called the "Black Bile of the World." When this volatile stuff dries, it hardens into a black material called bilestone. Similar to obsidian in texture and strength, bilestone feels slightly greasy and warm to the touch. Large concentrations have a debilitating effect on the minds of all non-aberrations within 30 feet. If such a creature is within this range of a cube of bilestone 5 or more feet to a side, it takes a –2 penalty on all saving throws against mind-affecting effects and on all Wisdom-based skill checks. Prolonged exposure to bilestone may have other debilitative effects on creatures—such exposure is the source of the vile rigidity that plagues the troglodytes in this adventure.

Fleet in several months' time. These troglodytes are all afflicted with vile rigidity, which infests their flesh with hard tumors and ever-thickening layers of dry skin. To ease their suffering, the lepers wrap themselves in bandages soaked in numbing salves and *black pulp poultices*. Despite the pain, they fanatically view their affliction as a divine blessing sent by their god, Laogzed. They grow their nails incredibly long and constantly scrape at their dead flesh, transforming their claws into cruelly diseased weapons.

Unless they hear a commotion in area **A2** and go to investigate, the troglodytes lie on filthy piles of seaweed, meditating on their pain. If the PCs manage to reach this area undetected, they startle the troglodytes, who clamber to their feet and hiss in surprise. Canny PCs may be able to convince the savages they are members of the Crimson Fleet (see area **A2**). If not, the troglodytes see the party's intrusion as a blasphemy against Laogzed and attack.

Trogodyte Lepers (4) **CR 4**

Troglodyte rogue 1/cleric 3 (Laogzed)
CE Medium humanoid (reptilian)
Monster Manual 246
Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 90 ft.; Listen +6, Spot +1
Aura stench (30 ft., DC 16)
Languages Common, Draconic

AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19
hp 56 (6 HD)
Fort +11, **Ref** +2, **Will** +4

Spd 30 ft.
Melee 2 claws +6 (1d6+2 plus disease) and bite +3 (1d4+1)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5
Atk Options smite 1/day (+4 attack, +3 damage), sneak attack +1d6
Special Actions death touch 1/day (3d6), rebuke undead 2/day (–1, 2d6+2)
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 3rd)
2nd—*hold person* (DC 13), *shatter*[D] (DC 13)
1st—*bless*, *cause fear*[D] (DC 12), *doom* (DC 12), *divine favor*
0—*create water*, *cure minor wounds*, *detect magic*, *guidance*
D domain spell; **Domains** Death, Destruction

Abilities Str 14, Dex 8, Con 20, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 8
SQ spontaneous casting (inflict spells), trapfinding, vile rigidity
Feats Brew Potion, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Multiattack, Weapon Focus (claw)
Skills Hide +8 (+12 in rocky or underground areas), Knowledge (religion) +1, Listen +6, Sense Motive +3, Spellcraft +0
Possessions *bracers of armor +1*, *black pulp poultice* (1d4 doses)

Disease (Ex) Any creature damaged by a troglodyte leper's claws must make a DC 19 Fortitude save to avoid catching vile rigidity.
Vile Rigidity (Ex) The troglodytes suffer from vile rigidity; their toughened skin improves their natural armor bonus by +3, but penalizes their Dexterity by –2. Daily applications of *black pulp poultices* stave off further developments of the sickness. A *remove disease* spell removes the adjustments to their natural armor and Dexterity.

Tactics: Two of the troglodyte lepers rush forward to engage intruders while their allies hang back to support the fighters with spells. Should the battle obviously turn against the melee attackers, however, those staying back flee down the hall through area **A4** to warn their people in Laogroat of the attack.

The clay jug nearest the grate leading to area **A2** is filled with green slime—the troglodytes use it to dispose of waste. On the second round of battle, one of the lepers casts *shatter* on the jar, causing the slime to spill out over everything within 5 feet. Creatures in that area must make a DC 12 Reflex save to avoid being spattered with slime (see page 76 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for details on green slime).

Treasure: Two of the three jars along the wall contain three doses of *black pulp poultice*. The large black rocks are geodes comprised of sharp black crystals and a sickly black ooze—these stones are the remains of protective bilestone shells (see sidebar)—containers used to transport *shadow pearls* from Holashner's Ziggurat (area **Q**). A DC 16 Knowledge (nature) check reveals that these stones are mere shells and that something spherical was once suspended inside. A DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) check recognizes the rock as bilestone; fortunately, there's not enough of the foul stuff here to impact the minds of nearby non-aberrations. There are 12 fractured bilestone geodes in all, each weighing 10 pounds and worth 50 gp apiece.

A4. Hall of Visions

Foul-smelling dyes and flaking pigments cover the cracked stone walls of this sloping passage. Decaying organs—perhaps the morbid palettes of the walls' brutish artists—lie in reeking heaps on the ground.

Between the primitive markings and bloody claw-prints, a lengthy series of crude pictograms extends down the hall. While many are faded and obscured, three stand out clearly. In the first, spear-bearing reptiles wander a maze of ever-descending tunnels. In the next, a large lizardlike creature exalts amid columned ruins, holding a black circle above its head as smaller creatures bow and are stricken dead. In the final section, a reptilian skull surrounded by a smoky mass of spiraling tentacles rains black spheres upon a cracking, smoking island.

Painted by clerics of Laogzed, these walls depict the troglodytes' misled vision of the creation and purpose of the *shadow pearls*. There are no words on the walls and nothing specific can be deciphered. If the PCs have captured a troglodyte, it might be able to interpret that these images show members of their tribe traveling deep to gather the *shadow pearls*, a priest of Laogzed claiming one of the pearls at the Temple of the Ancient Ones, and Laogzed himself creating the *shadow pearls* to sow destruction upon his people's enemies.

B. Laogroat

Elevation: 180 feet below sea level
Distance from Entrance Caverns: 4 miles

The cavern-village of Laogroat is dying. This wretched community of over 50 troglodytes is primitive even by their standards. The village consists of a dozen crude mud and stone huts, each built at a respectful distance from a 20-foot-tall statue of Laogzed. This image of the troglodyte god, however, is significantly warped from the standard interpretation, reflecting the corruption of their faith by the Demogorgon-worshiping koprus. A DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check correctly identifies the symbolisim of the change.

Three passages connect to the cavern housing Laogroat. The two eastern ones are secured by iron grates, and while they are kept unlocked, they're awkward and difficult to move without a great deal of noise (see area **A2**). The northern tunnel leads back to area **A**, while the southern one quickly turns into a warren of narrow tunnels that eventually connects to other troglodyte lairs and exits into the jungles of the Isle of Dread above. The third exit from this cavern is at area **B6**, and leads further down. A DC 10 Survival check is enough to note a path that has been worn from the northern passageway into the cavern toward **B6**, and that the entrance to the southern passageway appears relatively untraveled.

The horrific reek that fills this cavern forces any non-troglodyte to make a DC 14 Fortitude save to avoid being nauseated as long as they remain in this chamber. A character who leaves the cavern for at least ten minutes may attempt to re-enter, making a new Fortitude save to avoid becoming nauseated again.

The troglodytes of Laogroat are sedentary and do not expect visitors unless a troglodyte from area A made it here to warn them. Unless the PCs are particularly loud or carry bright lights, the lepers in area **B5** don't notice their arrival in the cavern. If they do, they quickly move to intercept the intruders, dealing with them as detailed in area **B5**.

B1. Troglodyte Hovels

Cobbled domes of rock and mud cover shallow pits in this large cavern. Entered through holes in the stone roofs, each damp dwelling reeks of rotting meat, reptile, and pungent herbs. Crude paintings on the wall depict all manner of reptilian creatures feasting on humanoid shapes. Many of these reptiles have two heads.

Creatures: Within each warren dwell four troglodytes deep in the ecstatic throes of vile rigidity. The troglodyte lepers tend to these suffering, linen-wrapped creatures, using *black pulp poultices* to keep them on the verge of death, where their minds can be more open to visions from their god. The diseased troglodytes aren't quite helpless, but fight only to defend their particular hovels and do not join in a defense of the cavern proper. Killing them is almost a mercy.

Diseased Troglodytes (44): AC 17, touch 5, flat-footed 17; Init –5; Ref –5; hp 13 each; Dex 1; *Monster Manual* 246.

B2. Blessing Cages (EL 7)

A pair of large cages with wooden bars sits precariously at the edge of a thirty-foot-wide charnel pit in the center of this cavern. Each cage contains two dead reptilian humanoids, their bodies twisted masses of tumors and shingles of unnecessary skin.

Laogzed's Redeemed have taken to raiding nearby troglodyte and lizardfolk tribes living to the south and on the island surface above. They imprison their captives here, allowing them to contract (and then die from) vile rigidity. Captured PCs likely end up here as well, facing the same fate.

Irgzid Uzeye

Creatures: The village's only heretic languishes among the dead within one of the cages, slumped on his side and appearing as dead as his cellmate. Irgzid Uzeye was once a member of the tribe's priest caste and one of the first servants of Laogzed to accept the blessed *shadow pearls* in the Temple of the Ancient Ones. Yet, while his brethren were blessed with Laogzed's Embrace soon after, due to some serendipitous resilience Irgzid never developed signs of the disease. Fearing what this suggested, Irgzid followed the other priests' lead, growing his claws to a wicked length and wrapping his body in rags. Over the course of several visits to the Temple of the Ancient Ones, Irgzid watched in silent despair as his tribe grew more and more sickly, and as his fellow priests seemed to drift further astray from the proper teachings of Laogzed. When the other priests took to adding a second head to the statue of Laogzed in area **B4**, Irgzid realized something horrible was happening to his people, and decided to do something about it.

The next time the troglodytes traveled to the Temple of the Ancient Ones to receive a shipment of *shadow pearls*, Irgzid gave his dim-witted kin the slip and snuck back into the flooded chamber after the meeting. He hoped to cross to the other side and explore the tunnel from which the koprus emerged, to find out what they were doing to his people, but he never quite made it across. For imprisoned within the waters of this sunken chamber was an ancient and tormented aboleth named N'glothnoru, a creature that had been held captive by the koprus for centuries. With no koprus present to punish it, the aboleth seized the opportunity and surfaced to speak with Irgzid as he entered the temple alone. Unable to enslave the troglodyte due to a *glyph of suppression* placed in the chamber long ago by the koprus, N'glothnoru was forced to use subtlety. Using *veil* to assume the form of a ghostly troglodyte priest, he then projected an image into the room above to speak to Irgzid, fooling the troglodyte into believing he was speaking to an ancestor ghost of a bygone age.

N'glothnoru realized Irgzid was not afflicted as his brothers and preyed on the troglodyte's fears. Threatening to reveal that the troglodyte was not "blessed" by their god, the aboleth also hinted that the secret truths the koprus were telling his people were lies and that Laogzed's Embrace was actually a disease spread by the Lords of Dread. N'glothnoru offered to keep the troglodyte's secret and free his people if he returned home and gathered warriors capable of slaying the aboleth's captors.

Upon returning to Laogroat, Irgzid tried to rally the strongest among his people to his cause. His coup quickly backfired with the unintended revelation of his health. Unwilling to murder one of their own, the lepers caged Irgzid, along with the corpses of several who had died of their affliction, hoping that forced proximity would break through his immunity.

Irgzid has spent the past several months imprisoned here, with lepers visiting him daily to preach to him of the sins of health. The priests hope that Irgzid will contract Laogzed's Embrace, so that he may again walk among his people. Irgzid clings to N'glothnoru's words, however, and daily seeks ways to escape and fulfill his promise to the aboleth. With the PCs' coming, he might just find a way to do both.

Small for his race and terribly emaciated, Irgzid is swaddled in filthy rags and salve-soaked bandages. Currently, Irgzid huddles within a large red cloak, which he stole from one of the corpses placed within his cage. As soon as he notices the PCs, he calls out to them, first in Draconic, then in Common. He begs them to set him free, offering the wealth and magic of the tribe's lepers (little more than the idols and fetishes in the priests' warren). If that doesn't work, he offers them his aid in obtaining whatever they came for. Should the party mention that they seek the source of the *shadow pearls*, Irgzid grows excited and exclaims that he knows where they're from and, if the PCs free him, he promises to lead them there. At this point, Irgzid should make an opposed Bluff check against the PCs. If he fails, it's obvious that the troglodyte is hiding something. If pressed on this matter, Irgzid admits that he believes the Lords of Dread have led his people away from the truth of Laogzed's worship and infected them with the disease they suffer from. Short of being tortured or magically compelled, Irgzid does not mention N'glothnoru or his deal with the aboleth. Once freed, the troglodyte leads the PCs to area **B6**, although, this probably attracts the attention of the lepers in area **B5**.

Irgzid isn't the only prisoner kept here. On a recent raid above, the lepers captured a rare prize—an Olman warrior. They've left him in a cage here, and once he's deep in the clutches of vile rigidity, they plan on sacrificing him to Laogzed.

This man is named Jakara, a member of a select group of Olmans who rely upon totems to aid them in their lifelong quests to rid the Isle of Dread from its demonic influences. Jakara recently encountered a Pelorian missionary named Noltus Innersol who was spreading the word of his god to the more savage tribes of humanoids dwelling in the isle's interior. Noltus was impressed with Jakara's skills and devotion to the slaughter of demons, and convinced the totemic demonslayer to travel to Farshore to show Vesserin Catherly (the colony's resident cleric) his methods and gifts.

Unfortunately, Jakara never made it to Farshore. He was attacked not long after he left Noltus's company by a group of skinwalkers (feral half-demon Olmans in thrall to the current lord of Thanaclan). He defeated them, but not before one of their sorcerers managed to *feeblemind* him. Reduced to little more than an animal, he wandered the jungles for several days before being captured by a group of troglodyte lepers and brought back here.

Since his capture, Jakara has also contracted vile rigidity. This, plus his feebleminded state have left him in a near catatonic state. If cured of his maladies, he thanks the PCs graciously and fervently, but is eager to return to the world above and continue on his trek to Farshore. If the PCs mention they come from there, Jakara promises to speak with them more when they return from their current mission.

The information Jakara has can serve as an adventure hook for the next installment in the Savage Tide Adventure Path. In addition, he may be willing to teach his methods of combatting demons to a PC he deems worthy. Further details on Jakara may be found in the next adventure, "City of Broken Idols," and in DRAGON #354's installment of Savage Tidings.

IRGZID UZEYE **CR 7**

Male troglodyte rogue 3/cleric 4
CE Medium humanoid (reptilian)
Monster Manual 246

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 90 ft.; Listen +7, Spot +2
Aura stench (30 ft., DC 16)
Languages Common, Draconic

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16
hp 82 (9 HD)
Immune disease
Fort +13, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee 2 claws +6 (1d6–1) and bite +3 (1d4–1)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +5
Atk Options smite 1/day (+4 attack, +4 damage), sneak attack +2d6
Special Actions death touch 1/day (4d6), rebuke undead 3/day (+0, 2d6+4)
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 4th)
2nd—*bear's endurance, cure moderate wounds, death knell*[D] (DC 14), *sound burst* (DC 14)
1st—*bless, cause fear*[D] (DC 13), *command* (DC 13), *cure light wounds, obscuring mist*
0—*create water, cure minor wounds, detect magic, detect poison, resistance*
D domain spell; **Domains** Death, Destruction

Abilities Str 8, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 10
SQ spontaneous casting (inflict spells), trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Brew Potion, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claws), Multiattack, Weapon Focus (claw)
Skills Balance +2, Bluff +3, Concentration +9, Hide +9 (+13 in rocky or underground areas), Intimidate +3, Jump +6, Knowledge (religion) +2, Listen +7, Move Silently +3, Sleight of Hand +5, Tumble +7

Jakara of the Tiger Clan: hp 97; currently suffering from *feeblemind* and late stage vile rigidity; DRAGON #354.

B3. Charnel Pit

This ten-foot-deep, thirty-foot-wide sinkhole is rimmed with wooden stakes. Disturbing fetishes and bits of bone hang from these rotting lengths of wood. Within the pit, dozens of reptilian bodies lie heaped in various stages of decay. The bodies are strangely dry, their skin flaking off the bone in brittle sheets and cancerous hunks.

Dozens of troglodytes have died as a result of Laogzed's Embrace, smothered by their own scales. To show their devotion to their god and his fatal boon, Laogzed's Redeemed have dug this 10-foot-deep pit that serves as an open-air grave. Any creature that falls into the pit must make a DC 12 Fortitude save to resist catching filth fever, and a second DC 19 Fortitude save to resist contracting vile rigidity.

B4. Laogzed's Altar (EL 9)

An immense statue of a rearing lizardlike beast crouches against the wall here. A second visage, that of a crudely carved fanged toad, juts from its exposed stomach, its maw partially open before a bloodstained altar stone.

This statue and altar are the spiritual center of Laogroat. Village meetings, daily prayers, and sacrifices to Laogzed are conducted here. Despite being a fanatically devout community, the vision Laogzed's Redeemed have of their deity is unlike that held by the majority of their race. This dual-headed interpretation of Laogzed stems from the influence of the Lords of Dread. Through continued contact and increasing influence, the koprus hope to gradually convert Laogzed's Redeemed to the worship of Demogorgon.

Creatures: Aside from the statue, two large piles of swamp plants and mud flank the altar. These masses are utilized by the troglodyte lepers as places to fixate on their pain and Laogzed's will. Of the 12 troglodyte lepers that dwell in this cavern, six are generally found here, deep in meditation and prayer. They rise quickly to defend any intrusion, fighting to the death. Once combat begins here, the remaining lepers in area **B5** arrive in 1d3 rounds.

Troglodyte Lepers (6): hp 56 each; see page 38.

B5. Priests' Warren (EL 9)

This mud and stone hut is festooned with chains of herbs, dried animal parts, and nasty-looking fungi. Between these decorations, images of fanged, two-headed reptiles have been painted on the stone in blood. South of the hut, several bloated reptilian bodies float within three stinking pools of briny fluid.

This hut is the dwelling place of the troglodyte lepers. Within, the hut is a cramped chamber that allows up to a dozen lepers to sleep at the same time. The clerics of Laogzed use the nearby pools to brew their *black pulp poultice*, sharing it first among themselves and distributing the remainder to their people.

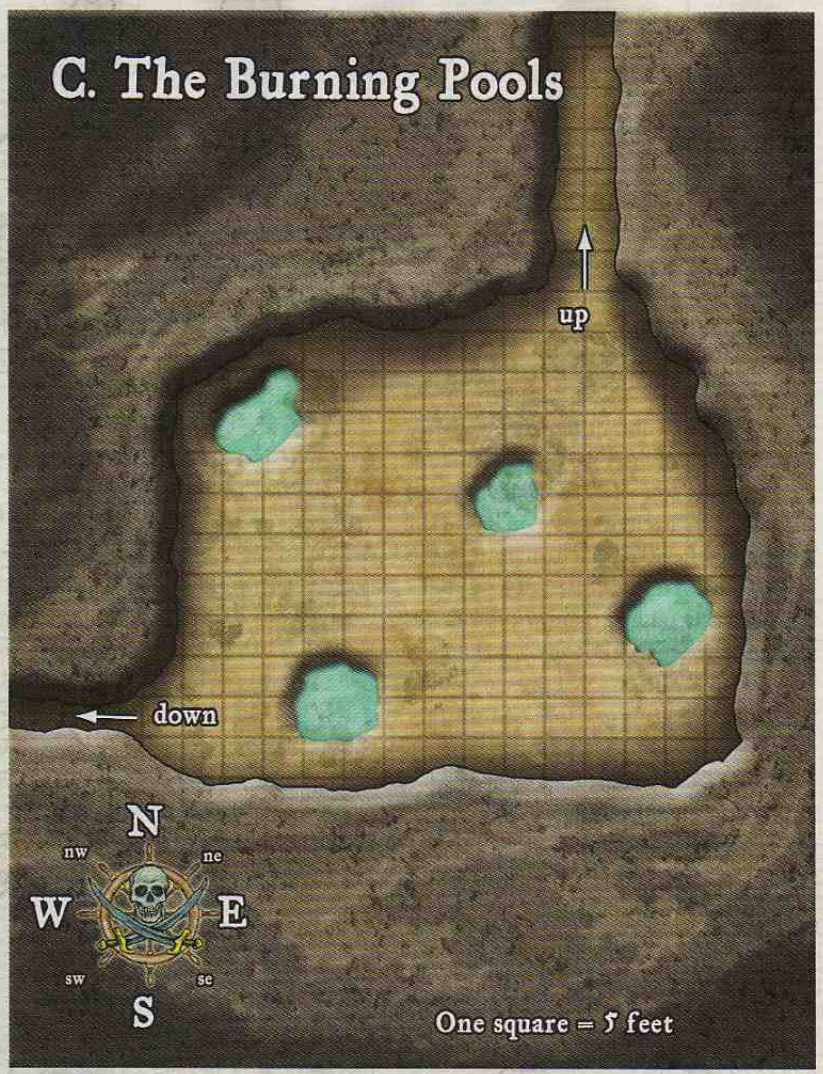
Creatures: Within the warren, several of the tribe's oldest clerics lie immobilized on leafy pallets, their bodies trapped under the weight of Laogzed's Embrace. Fending off death through the use of *black pulp poultice*, these clerics drift in and out of pain-filled consciousness. These elders have the same stats as troglodyte lepers, but are so disease-addled that they don't perceive the PCs as threats. The six lepers that attend to the elders, however, attack the party on sight.

Troglodyte Lepers (6): hp 56 each; see page 38.

Treasure: A DC 20 Search of the filth within the priests' warren reveals a shed troglodyte skin partially filled with shiny rocks, hunks of glass, bits of metal, and chips of gold and silver. The skin's contents are worth 450 gold.

Against one wall of the chamber are dozens of vials of a strange bluish liquid. This stuff is sannish, a drug popular in Scuttlecove for the euphoria it induces in its users. Although the drug also numbs pain, and would work wonders for the troglodyte's suffering, the troglodytes view their pain as a gift from Laogzed and to use the drug to lessen it would be blasphemous. In fact, sannish is a primary ingredient in the crafting of the *black pulp poultices* they constantly brew. There are 110 doses of the drug here—each dose is worth 15 gp on the black market. Additional information on sannish (as well as rules for addiction) can be found on pages 41–43 of the *Book of Vile Darkness*.

Outside the warren, the three pools contain nearly complete brews of *black pulp poultice*. Any character who makes a DC 20 Spellcraft check or a DC 25 Heal check can draw eighteen doses of *black pulp poultice* from the pools, given an hour of nauseating toil.



B6. The Black Way

A deep crevice yawns in the stone here, dropping away into the inky dark below. A rickety wooden lift descends into the darkness, raised and lowered by a primitive pulley system of frayed ropes.

This shaft serves as a passage into the lightless reaches below the Isle of Dread, and ultimately the ruined aboleth city of Golismorga. The lift can be operated by hand from above or on the lift itself. If more than 400 pounds is placed upon the lift, the whole thing plummets into the cavern 60 feet below.

A DC 10 Survival check is enough to note that there's been a lot of activity around the edge of this pit, and that a path has been worn between the pit's edge and the northern passageway to the east. If Irgzid is with the party, he tells them the source of the *shadow pearls* is down this shaft, and warns the PCs of the lift's maximum weight.

C. The Burning Pools (EL 13)

Elevation: 510 feet below sea level
Distance from Laogroat: 2 miles

Trickles of water emerge from a crack in the ceiling of this cavern, splitting into numerous rivulets that roll slowly down stalactites and drip off into the deep, milky pools that dot the floor of this chamber.

The liquid in this chamber may look like murky water, but is in fact highly acidic. Each pool is 40 feet deep, following a twisted course through softer veins of metal that have long since eroded away, leaving behind polished stone walls the liquid cannot consume. A splash of this stuff deals 1d6 acid damage, while total immersion deals 10d6 acid damage. Worse, the fumes rising from the acid fill this cavern with toxins, constituting an inhaled poison (Fortitude DC 13, 1 Con damage/1d4 Con damage).

If Irgzid is guiding the PCs, he stops them before entering this cavern and warns them of the burning pools and that they must hurry through the cave while holding their breath to avoid breathing the toxic air. Unfortunately, he doesn't know about the amorphous predator that has moved into the cavern.

Creature: An elder black pudding seeped up from the depths below to claim this cavern as its lair a few days ago. Immune to poison but not acid, the ooze has learned to avoid the pools of caustic liquid on the floor, spending most of its time heaped against the southeastern wall by the passageway leading down. It swiftly moves to attack anything that intrudes into the room.

Elder Black Pudding: hp 290; *Monster Manual* 201.

D. The Hanging Forest (EL 12)

Elevation: 960 feet below sea level
Distance from the Burning Pools: 8 miles

This seventy-foot-wide cavern drops away into a black gulf below. A forest of stalactites hangs from the ceiling, some dropping away out of sight into the darkness. A ledge, its surface glistening with moisture and mold, winds down the inner wall of the cavern, a descending path of dubious safety.

Once a volcanic shaft, this cavernous chasm drops 400 feet into a rubble-strewn field of petrified trees of all sizes, subsumed by the earth in some geologic upheaval and subsequently petrified. Chunks of shattered branches litter the floor, but a number of the logs are still surprisingly lifelike.

The ledge leading down the walls of the shaft is slippery but safe as long as it is navigated at no faster than a creature's base speed. A creature that takes faster action on this ledge (such as fighting or a double move) must make a DC 12 Balance check. Failure by 5 or more indicates a fall off the ledge.

Creature: This vertiginous cavern has long been the lair of a cantankerous roper. The creature feeds on vermin and other creatures that wander through the cave, but allows the diseased troglodytes to pass through on their voyages to and from the depths below for two reasons: the troglodytes never fail to offer it one of the slaves they're transporting below, and the roper's found that diseased troglodytes are particularly unappetizing. It has no qualms about eating PCs, of course, and once they come within 60 feet of the floor of this cave, it attacks with its strands.

If Irgzid is with the party, he warns them of the roper's presence but is at a loss on how it might react to the PCs; he knows only that when the troglodytes pass through here, they offer it a prisoner as a snack.

Roper: hp 85; *Monster Manual* 215.

Treasure: The roper has 43 pp and 5 garnets (each worth 100 gp) inside its gut. Other treasures can be found among the hundreds of bones that lie scattered across the floor of this cave. With a DC 20 Search check, ten minutes of searching turns up one of the following: a silver and ivory scepter worth 1,200 gp, a +1 *disruption flail*, a *cloak of protection* +3, or a *staff of frost* with 24 charges remaining.

Development: The roper's initial attitude is hostile, but if the PCs call out to it before they come within reach, they may be able to secure its cooperation (at least temporarily) with Diplomacy or Intimidate. If made friendly, the roper lets the PCs pass if they offer it a live snack or at least 1,000 gp in gems. If made helpful, the roper lets them pass without an offering.

E. The Cerulean Curtain

Elevation: 1,800 feet below sea level
Distance from the Hanging Forest: 16 miles

The tunnel widens into a large cavern nearly two hundred feet in diameter. A shimmering curtain of rippling blue light bisects this cavern from left to right and floor to ceiling. The light resembles a translucent membrane that swirls and sparkles like the surface of a pond. The cavern on the other side is visible through this sheen, and the tunnel proceeds around a corner at the far end. Shapes and figures seem to ripple and writhe along this curtain of cerulean light, and now and then these shapes pass by slowly enough to be identified as Olman warriors in full battle regalia, their mouths open in silent screams. A low whispering fills the room, but the cave is otherwise silent.

This strange wall of light is the boundary of the Cerulean Curtain, a shell of energy miles across that encircles the ancient aboleth city of Golismorga like a bubble, its edges passing harmlessly through air and stone alike. Created ages ago when a group of Olman warriors triggered *Tlaloc's Tear* at the end of the aboleth war, the Cerulean Curtain has two effects. First, the curtain is a potent ward against the influence of aberrant thoughts and magic. The curtain automatically dispels any ongoing mind-affecting effect on any creature that passes through it. Likewise, mind-affecting effects cannot target creatures on the opposite side of the curtain from the source. In this way the Olmans ensured that the aboleth would not be able to simply send hordes of enslaved minions after them or their device.

The Curtain's second effect is that it blocks the waters of the submerged ocean from flooding the caverns within. While water in containers or as part of a creature can pass through with ease, freely flowing water cannot. Here and there, small flaws in the curtain allow water to trickle in, preventing the caverns within from becoming completely lifeless. These narrow streams pool and seep through the caves to eventually collect in Golismorga and other caverns, forming small pools of water that serve to keep those who live in this region alive. Yet for the aboleths, such trace amounts of water are little more than a tease.

Seen in small sections, the Cerulean Curtain appears as a flat blue membrane that's easily penetrated and cool to the touch. The spirits of countless Olman warriors who died during the aboleth war inhabit the Curtain—these spirits are periodically visible to anyone observing the Curtain's face. Though incapable of taking direct action on their own, it is these spirits who infuse the shield with its power. Their whispers permeate the Cerulean Curtain, occasionally resolving into snatches of the Olman language. Within 30 feet of the curtain, these whispers are unmistakable, but beyond this range they are much more subdued.

As a creature passes through the Curtain, this whispering rises sharply to an almost painful roar, as of a thousand people shouting as many different phrases, then falls quiet again just as quickly when the traveler emerges from the other side. From that moment on, those within the sphere find themselves subject to random bursts of disconcerting mutterings, particularly at times of great stress.

Though the Olman spirits have no power to directly affect the PCs, occasional spates of ghostly whispers are an excellent way to drive home the creepy atmosphere of this adventure. An attempt to comprehend these whispers requires a DC 15 Listen check and the ability to understand the Olman language. While the content of these otherworldly diatribes is left up to you, consider using them to foreshadow coming events, dropping hints like "two faces watch the tide" or "the maw flows forth to bite" between incoherent ravings. The whispers should be at their strongest near places of Olman significance, such as the ruined temple in area **I** or the crater at area **P**.

The Cerulean Curtain functions at caster level 20th, but as long as *Tlaloc's Tear* still exists in area **P**, no form of mortal magic can dispel or suppress this field.

F. The Way to Barbas

Elevation: 2,100 feet below sea level
Distance from the Cerulean Curtain: 1 mile

The primary tunnel branches one mile from the Cerulean Curtain cavern. One 30-foot-wide tunnel continues south, while a 20-foot-wide cavern angles off to the west. A DC 20 Survival check made by a character with Track is enough to indicate that the amount of traffic heading down the 20-foot-wide tunnel is much more than the trickle heading west.

If Irgzid is with the PCs, he pauses at this intersection, explaining that the southern route leads on to where the troglodytes have met with the Lords of Dread. He then grows thoughtful, telling the PCs that the western route leads to a tangled maze of chambers, but at the far end is a secluded settlement called Barbas. Irgzid has been to Barbas only once as a child—before the troglodytes of Laogroat forged their alliance with the Lords of Dread and fell victim to the sickness, they often traded with the town. Now, though, the Barbans have closed their borders to the troglodytes, having little desire to accept their pestilence within their walls. Barbas is likely to be the only place where the PCs will find safety and shelter in the lightless depths, and further, they may know more about the *shadow pearls* and the mysterious koprus. A visit to Barbas shouldn't take too long, and while he is reluctant to accompany the PCs, Irgzid encourages them to do so.

F1. The Maze (EL 7)

Between this intersection and the village of Barbas is a large but low-ceilinged cavern called the maze. This area is little more than a 10-foot-high horizontal crack in the earth, 200 yards wide and covered with scree and gravel, as well as larger boulders torn loose from the ceiling. Due to the density of these scattered monoliths, visibility is reduced to a maximum of 30 feet in any direction. Between the stones, patches of color hint at plant life, suggesting a subterranean pasture of epic proportions. The temperature in this vast vault is noticeably lower than elsewhere in the tunnels.

To protect themselves against wandering monsters and other unwelcome visitors, the citizens of Barbas have carefully cultivated the fungus in this chamber to hide a deadly secret. The fungus is laced with patches of yellow and brown mold (both detailed on page 76 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), leaving a single winding trail of safety from one end to the other. The 10-foot-wide trail through the Maze winds roughly a thousand feet in all. Anyone who doesn't know the safe route can navigate it by making five DC 25 Survival checks to avoid the dangerous mold. Each failure exposes the group to both patches of mold. Any fire source brought into the maze immediately

triggers a nearby patch of brown mold, causing it to expand into a ten-foot square containing the offending PC, potentially covering that section of the path.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs make it across the maze successfully, give them a CR 7 award.

F2. The Killing Field (EL 11)

Here the ceiling rises to twenty feet and the vast plain of moldy gravel parts, giving way to a large hemisphere of bare stone dotted with short pillars. Ahead, makeshift walls of wood and stone surround a sprawling shantytown.

Creatures: For those invaders, monstrous or otherwise, who manage to make it through the maze and approach Barbas's gates, one final defense awaits. In the cleared field before its gates, six hook horrors prowl the grounds. The hook horrors are fed and cared for by the citizens of Barbas, and the beetle-like creatures quickly rally in a line in front of the gates to Barbas if they notice anyone emerging from the maze, howling an alarm and clashing their hooklike arms together in a threatening display intended to scare off intruders and alert their masters.

A hook horror is a 9-foot-tall insectoid humanoid creature, with a vulturelike head and two powerful arms that end in immense curved hooks.

Hook Horrors (6) **CR 6**

N Large aberration

Monster Manual II 126

Init +3; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +17, Spot +1

Languages Undercommon

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 19

hp 65 (10 HD)

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +8

Weakness light sensitivity

Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +13 (1d6+7) and bite +8 (2d6+3)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +18

Atk Options improved grab (both claws), power sunder, rending bite (3d6+10)

Abilities Str 24, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 9

Feats Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Trip, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Listen)

Skills Climb +15, Hide +3 (+11 in subterranean areas), Listen +17

Light Sensitivity (Ex) Exposure to bright light imposes a –2 penalty on a hook horror's attack rolls.

Power Sunder (Ex) A hook horror that attempts to sunder does not provoke attacks of opportunity and inflicts double damage to any object struck.

Rending Bite (Ex) If a hook horror wins a grapple check, it automatically hits with its rending bite attack on the same round (this replaces its normal bite attack for that round).

Tactics: The citizens of Barbas are isolationists, and generally assume anyone that comes to their village these days is an enemy. When the hook horrors raise the alarm, dozens of Barbas's deformed citizens clamber up onto the walls to watch the hook horrors defend the city. As long as the PCs don't intrude more than 5 feet from the maze into the killing field, the hook horrors don't attack. This should give the PCs a chance to shout out greetings to the village of Barbas. Assume the village's initial attitude is unfriendly. If the PCs can convince Barbas of their peaceful intentions by adjusting this attitude to helpful, the guards call down commands to the hook horrors to stand aside and allow the PCs entry.

Otherwise, any attempt to approach Barbas results in the hook horrors attacking. The ceiling is only 20 feet high over the killing fields, so even flying PCs are

still in reach of the hook horrors' attacks. If defeated, the citizens panic and retreat to their homes, leaving the gates to Barbas undefended.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs talk their way past the hook horrors, award them experience as if they had defeated them in combat.

G. Barbas

Elevation: 1,600 feet below sea level
Distance from the Way to Barbas: 1/2 mile

The town of Barbas squats in a dead-end cavern, the ceiling of which rarely rises above thirty feet and in many places dips down as low as ten feet, creating a claustrophobic shantytown. The town's structures appear makeshift at best and nearing collapse at worst, their walls built from rubble, moldy wood, caked mud, and bone. A tepid pond shimmers in the center of town, fed by a trickle of water from the western cave wall. A haze hangs in the air, a mixture of smoke, spores, and stink lit by dozens of feebly burning torches mounted on stalactites or facades. The only areas not claimed by crumbling buildings are the crooked streets and several farms of faintly glowing fungi and pallid mushrooms the size of men.

After the Olmans activated *Tlaloc's Tear* and drove the waters from Golismorga, the surviving aboleth caught outside the Cerulean Curtain attempted to reclaim their city by sending wave after wave of enslaved minions into the caverns, hoping that at least a few would manage to reach Golismorga and destroy the *Tear*. Passing through the Curtain freed the slaves, however, and they fled to the darkest corners within to escape their horrific captors. Over the course of several years, these freed Olmans, lizardfolk, rakasta, phanatons, bullywugs, and other humanoids gathered together for safety in this dead-end cavern, inside the Cerulean Curtain yet far from the haunted city of Golismorga. Over dozens of generations, inbreeding and interspecies affection saw something of a homogenization of these folk, and in time they grew more alike than not.

Against all odds, Barbas has persevered. Its citizens have mastered the art of farming fungi and lichen and keep subterranean vermin like giant beetles as livestock. Stone and ore pried from the cavern walls provide their smiths and craftsmen with adequate materials, while gems harvested in bulk from certain volcanic caves allow them to trade for wood and other much-needed surface supplies with the occasional troglodyte merchant. Though a few of the humanoid races, such as lizardfolk and troglodytes, have arrived in sufficient numbers to breed true, the average resident is humanoid in basic frame only. Squat, pale, and sporting a myriad of bizarre deformations, these are mongrelfolk, and tales of the surface world are told as legends to their twitching, malformed children.

In addition to their strange appearances, mongrelfolk can emulate any race for the purposes of using racially-specific magic items, and can mimic any voice or sound they've heard—a trait that may unnerve PCs as the naturally curious residents begin aping their speech and mannerisms. The residents of Barbas go out of their way to avoid conflict with the PCs—they've lived this long thanks to a healthy dose of cowardice and self-loathing. As a result, no statistics are provided for mongrelfolk, but if required, they may be found on page 125 of the *Fiend Folio*.

Barbas (Hamlet): Conventional; AL LN; Population 147; 100 gp limit; Assets 735 gp; Isolated (132 mongrelfolk, 8 troglodytes, 7 lizardfolk).

Authority Figure: **Headman Vertram Xapatalo** (male mongrelfolk expert 3/wizard 2).

G1. Town Hall

The largest building in Barbas, and certainly the most well-made, is the town hall. This area is described in "Visiting Barbas" below.

G2. Store

Run by a one-armed and thrice-tongued freak named **Shifred Ogsmoth** (male mongrelfolk expert 3), "Store" remains the first and only establishment of its kind in Barbas. Most of the residents prefer to barter with each other in the streets, a practice that Shifred doesn't mind, as it allows him to snap up bargains and sell them back to the public as need demands. Inside the shop, customers are confronted with a wide variety of goods and knick-knacks, from swords and alchemical gear to fodder and jewelry—and of course, the boisterous proprietor himself.

G3. Shrine to Mictlantecuhtli

While the isolation of Barbas's residents has eroded all but the most cursory knowledge of religion and history, the need for some sort of spirituality has led them to worship an ancient stone statue in the center of the settlement, a crude depiction of a skeletal figure wrapped in a large python. While the villagers know their god only as the "Snake Father," a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check is enough to identify the idol as belonging to Mictlantecuhtli, the Olman god of death. This same check reveals that the rituals surrounding his worship here are entirely the residents' invention, and in some cases go directly against Olman canon, though the few clerics who keep this shrine happily use their healing spells on residents and travelers in exchange for the bare necessities. Whether it's actually Mictlantecuhtli granting these powers is anyone's guess.

G4. Ganfer's Wallow

Rebuilt numerous times over the town's history and maintained as a group effort, the structure known as Ganfer's Wallow is a public hall used for everything from weddings to funerals. **Ganfer** (male lizardfolk expert 2), the gruff and aging lizardfolk in charge of the establishment, makes his living as a professional host and master of ceremonies. Though a creature of few words, Ganfer's halting Common belies the razor wit that's kept him the town's resident entertainer for so long.

G5. The Nursery

The children of Barbas are too precious a commodity to be left in the care of their

parents. As soon as a child is born, it is taken into the custody of the nursery staff, where mongrelfolk midwives and tutors educate and care for the young until the age of fourteen, at which point they're considered adults and sent out to work in the profession most befitting their skills. As a result, Barbas's citizens regard numerous folk in the village as their parents, referring to all older residents as "Mother" and "Father."

G6. The Furnace

Due to the short supply of fuel in the caves, blacksmithing is an expensive and exacting profession. In order to help mitigate this, Barbas's smiths share a communal forge. Situated directly beneath a narrow chimney in the vault's ceiling, the resulting smoke is quickly drawn upward and out of the cavern by a constant draft.

G7. Stoneweep

Although the stream that feeds the central pond in Barbas looks natural, it is in fact artificial. Perhaps the most important duty of Barbas's priests is the daily ritual in which they cast several *create water* spells to replenish the supply of water here. Overflow drifts to the west along an ancient creek bed, evaporating before accumulating enough to burst its meager banks.

Visiting Barbas

If the PCs enter the town after defeating the hook horrors, they are subjected to the nervous stares of residents who peer, awed and anxious, from partially closed hovel doors.

After a few moments, a tall albino mongrelfolk male, far less deformed than the others (to the extent that he almost looks human), steps forward and addresses the party. The crowd grows quiet as he speaks. If the PCs understand Olman, read them the following.

"Greetings, travelers. My name is Vertram, and I am the headman here. I apologize for the... inconveniences... you have faced with our guardians, but the tunnels in this region become more dangerous with each year. Regardless, our city is open to you. Please put away your weapons, and be welcome in Barbas."

If the PCs make no aggressive moves, Vertram nods slightly, and the party suddenly finds itself swarmed by children and other residents, curiously prodding and examining both their gear and their bodies. After a moment Vertram steps forward and leads the party through the narrow streets to the town hall, asking questions and pointing out various landmarks. Once there, he invites the PCs to stay with him in the hall, and immediately orders the preparation of a feast. If Irgzid is still with the party, Vertram is a little suspicious of the troglodyte, but as long as the PCs vouch for him, he treats him as a guest as well.

The town hall itself is two stories tall and significantly larger than the other structures, though built of the same scraps and detritus. Inside, Vertram directs the PCs to several guest rooms with exactly enough beds to go around, mattresses piled high with strange but soft animal pelts, before leading them to a large chamber used for town meetings. The feast is attended by himself and the PCs only, and consists of a bland dinner of mushrooms and tough, salty meat from a monstrous centipede.

Vertram (male mongrelfolk expert 3/wizard 2) is an anomaly among the citizens of Barbas. Despite generations of incest and interbreeding, his Olman blood has remained dominant. While still a mongrelfolk, he could pass as human. That said, life in the caves has still left its mark—in addition to his red eyes and albino skin, Vertram's left cheek bears a swirling, puckered scar that pulls that side of his face into a permanent smirk, and shoulder-length hair does not quite hide the fact that he's completely missing his right ear.

Vertram encourages the party to rest and recoup, bartering with the locals for anything they might need and sharing stories of the surface world. After they've eaten and taken care of any immediate business, however, he sits the party down and confesses to them that he fears for the safety of his people. For many generations, they've lived in relative peace with the troglodytes of the upper caverns. Yet recently, one tribe in particular has become more aggressive, and more warlike. The maze and the hook horrors have done well enough to keep these troglodytes from directly assaulting Barbas, but for the past several years it's been much more dangerous than anyone can remember to travel the outer caverns.

Vertram believes that change is coming to Barbas. He's heard whispers in the air warning of dire events, of something stirring deep below. The citizens of Barbas know of the kopru of Golismorga only as vague stories of monsters that dwell in the forbidden caverns, and while Vertram knows little more than that, he does believe that these creatures, known as the Lords of Dread, have become more active. In these whispers and in his dreams, he's seen images of "men and women from the land of light" who come to Barbas to deliver her from these dark times. He does not go as far to say that the PCs are the ones he's dreamed of, but his expression says enough.

Unfortunately, Vertram knows little more about what awaits the PCs. He can relate the legends and history of Barbas, of how the ancestors of the surface waged war with a city of demon fish deep below, and of how they drew that war to an end by casting down the tear of the god of rain and storms into the depths. This tear burst, and drove the waters of the flooded caverns away, and the spirits of the fallen ancients now guard this region. Their presence holds the waters at bay, and as long as they persist, the demon fish cannot return. Yet Vertram believes that something else has filled the void left by the expulsion of the fish. He fears that whatever has moved into the ruins of Golismorga may be seeking the vile secrets of the demon fish, and that if they discover these secrets they may become an even greater threat to the world.

Vertram is prepared to let the PCs stay in Barbas as long as they wish, but once they speak of a need to leave, he asks if they would like to see one of the demon fish. If the PCs would, he smiles cryptically, gathers several mongrelfolk

guards, and leads them back through the maze and down to area **H**.

As the PCs leave Barbas, they notice its residents silently packing their few belongings, and note many expressions of sadness and fear. If they ask Vertram, he explains that his visions have warned him that the doom that comes to Barbas cannot be diverted. After he returns from guiding the party to the Cavern of the Sleeping God, he intends to lead his people up to higher caves, or perhaps even the surface. Barbas's time has come and gone. If the PCs return here later in the adventure, they find the place deserted.

H. Cavern of the Sleeping God

Elevation: 2,300 feet below sea level
Distance from the Way to Barbas: 2 miles

On the far side of this large cavern, a shimmering blue wall extends all the way to the sixty-foot-high ceiling. Across its surface, ghostly Olman warriors shimmer and flicker. Just beyond it, the occasional bubble or flash of scales reveals the presence of thousands of gallons of water, their awesome weight held at bay by the shell of energy.

On the floor in the center of the cave is a strange-looking mound of stone shaped like an enormous, petrified fish.

Though aboleths are capable of leaving the water and dragging themselves along the ground with their tentacles when necessary, their mucous-like skin dries out quickly, eventually hardening to a shell so stiff that they find themselves unable to move at all. In this situation, the effectively immortal creatures do not die, but instead enter a state of hibernation known as "the Long Dreaming" until immersed in water, at which point they return to their normal state in a matter of minutes. While petrified, an aboleth remains awake and aware of its surroundings, but is unable to take any actions, even purely mental ones. Over time, this horrific state drives most aboleths mad, and this particular one (caught over a thousand years ago by the detonation of *Tlaloc's Tear*) is no exception.

If the PCs were led here by Vertram, he unveils his prize with considerable pride and pomp. Though the citizens of Barbas discovered the creature long ago, few have been brave enough to place an ear to its side and hear the sloshing, rhythmic thud of the creature's inner organs, and fewer still have been granted permission by the headman to study it, lest they somehow awaken the sleeping giant. That, however, is exactly what he recommends the party do, urging them to "open it up" and learn as much as they can from the creature before continuing on to Golismorga.

PCs who approach and examine the hibernating horror can make a DC 17 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check to recognize the petrified fish as an aboleth. A DC 17 Heal check made while examining it reveals that the aboleth is still alive, but in some form of hibernation that renders it immobile, even when attacked. The leathery, dried husk grants the aboleth a +6 bonus on its natural armor (offsetting the penalty for being reduced to a Dexterity of 0) and damage reduction 5/adamantine. Nonetheless, since the aboleth is unable to defend itself, the PCs gain no experience for killing it.

I. Temple of the Ancient Ones (EL 8)

Elevation: 4,000 feet below sea level
Distance from the Way to Barbas: 20 miles
Distance from the Cavern of the Sleeping God: 16 miles

The tunnel walls here change suddenly from rough natural stone to an intricately carved corridor bearing glyphs and mosaics of Olman design, just before they open into an immense flooded chamber. The walls of the square chamber rise up in steps,

forming an inverted ziggurat with an apex forty feet above the dark waters that flood the room to just below the edge of the entrance. The floor is a ruin of smashed pillars and small islands constructed in the same roughly pyramidal fashion. In the center, a line of destroyed columns and altars protrudes a few feet above the surface, creating a makeshift bridge that dips briefly into the water before reaching the continuing passage on the far side.

This chamber is where the troglodytes meet with the koprus to receive *shadow pearls*. This close to his aboleth patron, Irgzid grows more and more excited, but does his best to maintain his composure. Any PC that speaks with Irgzid within a mile of this location can make a Sense Motive check opposed by Irgzid's Bluff check to realize the troglodyte is just barely restraining his excitement. If questioned, Irgzid admits that they're coming close to where the troglodytes receive shipments of *shadow pearls* from the Lords of Dread. Only if magically compelled or threatened with a successful Intimidate check does he reveal the presence of the aboleth N'glothnoru, at which point he begs the PCs to speak to the creature for fear of the implied repercussions for his tribe.

The water in this chamber varies from 10 to 50 feet in depth, and is thick with dark, foul-smelling algae and ribbons of slime from the long confinement of its prisoner.

The troglodytes arrive at the northern landing on the day of the meeting and wait for the koprus to arrive at the southern entrance. When the koprus arrive, one swims across the room while the others stand guard, prepared to leap into the water to punish their prisoner (see Creature, below) if it causes any problems. Emerging at the troglodyte end of the room, he unfolds a *portable hole* that contains the latest shipment of 1d4 *shadow pearls*, still cradled in their bilestone shells; the troglodytes take the *pearls* and load them onto a palanquin made of bones and leather, handing the listless, drugged slaves provided by their Crimson Fleet contacts over to the koprus in payment. The slaves are loaded into the *portable hole* and the kopru returns with his kin to Golismorga, while the troglodytes return to Laogroat to crack open the bilestone shells, remove the

Aboleth Master Glyphs

Aboleths have developed a method of creating powerful magic glyphs. Most of these glyphs simply duplicate the effect of a *glyph of warding*, but there are other, more powerful glyphs called master glyphs that can be used to create more potent effects, such as enhancing their supernatural abilities or harming enemies who draw too near. Master glyphs affect a creature upon its initial entry into the glyph's range. The effects of multiple glyphs do not stack; the glyph with the highest caster level suppresses any lesser glyph effects. Like other magic items, a glyph can be destroyed (although this typically requires the destruction of the structure or surface on which the master glyph is inscribed)—the aboleth glyphs in Golismorga have long since been ruined. Some kopru have mastered the feat of crafting master glyphs as well—the *glyph of suppression* in area I being a prime example of their work.

Glyph of Suppression: Any aboleth within 120 feet of this glyph cannot use its enslave special attack.

Moderate abjuration; CL 9th; Craft Aboleth Glyph (*Lords of Madness* 22), *break enchantment*; Price 40,000 gp.

shadow pearls, and wait for the next visit from Scuttlecove to begin the process anew.

Creature: The aboleth N'glothnoru was trapped in this cavern when *Tlaloc's Tear* drove the water from these caves. Quickly succumbing to the Long Dreaming, the stranded aboleth was the first one discovered by the Olmans who came down to investigate the results their work, and it became a symbol for the triumph over Golismorga. The Olmans erected a temple around the dreaming aboleth, carving away at the cavern walls to surround their captured foe with the marks of their own civilization.

After the Olman empire collapsed, N'glothnoru spent several hundred years alone in this isolated cavern. Not long after the koprus discovered the ruins of Golismorga, a band of scouts came across this cavern and were bemused by the aboleth's plight. They'd seen other petrified aboleths elsewhere, but this one's obvious torment amused them. Using aboleth glyph magic they'd discovered and mastered in Golismorga, kopru priests inscribed an inverted *glyph of extension*, transforming it into a *glyph of suppression* that blocks N'glothnoru's enslave ability. They then used a *decanter of endless water* to fill the bottom half of the chamber, awakening the aboleth into its new prison.

The aboleth has been tortured and tormented by the koprus for hundreds of years now. Indeed, much of what the koprus know now about Golismorga's secrets was pried from N'glothnoru. Yet despite the period of Long Dreaming and the following centuries of equally frustrating torment, N'glothnoru has retained a good portion of its cognition. While it knows that it stands a good chance of overpowering its oppressors and escaping the chamber, it has no idea how far it is to open water and doesn't relish the idea of entering the excruciating Long Dreaming again. For centuries, it has been content to wait and see what happens.

N'glothnoru remains ever vigilant, and as soon as it notices the PCs' arrival in the cave, it uses *veil* on itself to assume the shape of a ghostly troglodyte highpriest, then uses *project image* to manifest an image of its disguise atop the eastern balcony. Even if the PCs are stealthy about their entrance, if Irgzid is with them, the troglodyte moves ahead of the PCs into the room to loudly announce himself, saying, "I have brought you the heroes you asked for, Father! What do you wish of them?"

Through the *projected image* of his troglodyte priest-ghost, N'glothnoru addresses the PCs (and Irgzid, if he's there), telling them it is a manifestation of the tormented spirits of this realm. It speaks in Draconic at first, but due to its Memory Eater feat, it can easily switch to any other language to communicate if it wishes.

N'glothnoru wants one thing, and one thing only: the destruction of the Cerulean Curtain. It knows that something in Golismorga is sustaining the barrier, and gladly relates this information, telling the PCs that the Curtain's anchor lies within the ruins of Golismorga, and that it is somehow connected to the Olman god of rain, Tlaloc. In addition, being present for countless *shadow pearl* hand-offs has given it a vague outline of the related plot, though it remains ignorant of the plot's true mastermind. As soon as the PCs arrive, the aboleth realizes that its salvation is at hand—if it plays its cards right. In talking with the PCs, it uses any means necessary to convince the characters to continue on to Golismorga to break the Curtain, lying or telling the truth with equal ease and relying on its powerful alien mind to shield its true motives. For some parties, it might offer a portion of the truth—that destroying the Cerulean Curtain and flooding Golismorga is the best way to take out the koprus' *shadow pearl* operation completely—though whether it states this as itself or in the guise of the troglodyte spirit depends on the party. It might even attempt blatant bribery or suggest that the koprus are prepared to launch an all-out *shadow pearl* attack on the surface world. Whatever the story, N'glothnoru tries to ensure that the party comes away from the conversation with two key pieces of information: that the Cerulean Curtain is generated from somewhere in Golismorga, and that destroying it is the only way to permanently disrupt the *shadow pearl* creation process.

N'glothnoru has no interest in combat, but if attacked it uses its *projected image* to create *hypnotic patterns* and illusions to try to trick the PCs into entering the water below so it can attack them physically. If also tries to trick the party into destroying the *glyph of suppression* on the ceiling above, perhaps claiming that it is the only thing that keeps the water in this chamber from vanishing.

N'GLOTHNORU **CR 8**

Elite aboleth

LE Gargantuan aberration (aquatic)

Monster Manual 9

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +13, Spot +13

Aura mucus cloud (1-ft., Fort DC 21)
Languages all

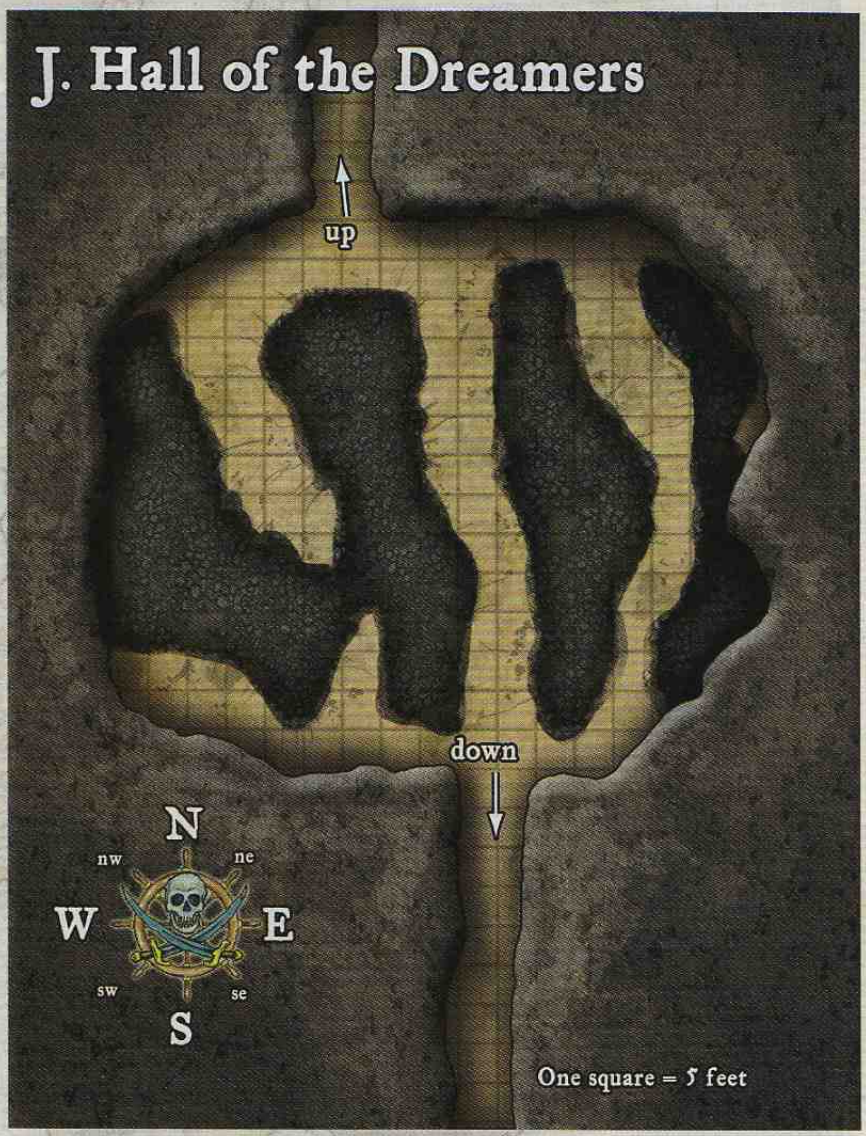
AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 15
hp 92 (8 HD)
Fort +9, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8

Spd 10 ft., swim 60 ft.
Melee 4 tentacles +13 (1d8+9 plus slime, DC 21)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +23
Special Actions enslave (DC 19, cannot use in this encounter)
Psionics (CL 16th)
At will—*hypnotic pattern* (DC 17), *illusory wall* (DC 19), *mirage arcana* (DC 20), *persistent image* (DC 20), *programmed image* (DC 21), *project image* (DC 22), *veil* (DC 21)
3/day—quickened *illusory wall* (DC 19)

Abilities Str 29, Dex 14, Con 24, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 21
Feats Improved Natural Attack (tentacle), Memory Eater, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*illusory wall*)
Skills Concentration +18, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Listen +13, Spot +13, Swim +17

Memory Eater This feat (*Lords of Madness* 22) allows N'glothnoru to retain all of the memories of any eaten creature, granting it the ability to make untrained skill checks in any skill and the ability to speak all languages.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs avoid combat with N'glothnoru and learn about *Tlaloc's Tear* and the koprus from it, give them a CR 9 experience award.



J. Hall of the Dreamers (EL 12)

Elevation: 7,000 feet below sea level
Distance from the Temple of the Ancient Ones: 17 miles

The passageway opens into a roughly circular cavern. A ten-foot-wide ledge runs across the northern and southern faces of the room, with a passage leading away from each. Graceful arcs of natural stone bridge the two ledges in three places, although the easternmost bridge has collapsed in the center, leaving a five-foot-wide gap. Above, the ceiling rises up to a height of nearly forty feet, while below the ground drops away an equal distance into a rubble-strewn gulf. What appear to be six immense petrified fish lie on the floor of the crevice. The sound of whispering wells up from below, and the ground looks almost like it's moving.

The natural stone bridges are wide but smooth and slippery, with edges that slope away dramatically from a fairly narrow band of level ground down the center of the bridge. A character who runs or fights on a bridge must make a DC 12 Balance check. Failure by 5 or more indicates a slip and 40-foot-fall into the rubble below.

The six fishlike shapes are aboleth that have succumbed to the Long Dreaming. They've lain in close proximity for centuries, unable to make contact with each other or affect their surroundings. Yet they are not alone.

The whispering sound and strangely moving ground are the result of chittering swarms of grubs, white spiders, whip scorpions, centipedes, and other vermin. Although horrifying to observe, this immense swarm is physically harmless to larger creatures. Nonetheless, any creature standing on the ground in the pit is quickly swarmed by the creatures, and must make a DC 14 Fortitude save each round or be nauseated for 1 round. The larger vermin that dwell in this cavern are not so hindered by the swarms.

Creatures: While the majority of the insects swarming in the pit are harmless vermin, the three horse-sized arachnids that clamber about on the walls are not. These monsters are blackfang rhagodessas, spider-like creatures with dark brown and yellow striped bodies. The front pair of their ten spindly legs end

BY F. WESLEY SCHNEIDER AND JAMES LAFOND SUTTER

in terrible discs studded with dozens of hooked suckers. Even more horrifying are their oversized heads dominated by twin pairs of vertically snapping black mandibles the size of scimitars. Characters may recognize the general shape of these monsters from their first encounter aboard the *Blue Nixie* so long ago, yet these creatures are nearly three times the size of the rhagodessas they fought in Sasserine.

The blackfang rhagodessas quickly clamber up the walls to attack anyone who enters, and pursue as long as they can to complete their meals.

Blackfang Rhagodessas (3) **CR 9**
Advanced rhagodessa
N Large vermin
Dungeon #139 46
Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +2

AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14
hp 102 (12 HD)
Immune vermin traits
Fort +12, **Ref** +4, **Will** +6

Spd 40 ft., climb 40 ft.
Melee 2 pedipalps +17 (0 damage) and bite +15 (2d6+13)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +26
Atk Options Spring Attack, improved grab (pedipalp), powerful bite

Abilities Str 28, Dex 10, Con 18, Int —, Wis 14, Cha 6
Feats Multiattack, Spring Attack

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, a rhagodessa must hit a creature of its size or smaller with a pedipalp attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it establishes a hold, it can make a bite attack as a free action, gaining a +4 bonus on its attack roll with this attack. The hooks and suckers the rhagodessa uses to clutch prey tear flesh if a grapple creature escapes with an opposed grapple check, causing 1d6 points of damage to the escaping creature. A creature that escapes with Escape Artist does not suffer this damage. A rhagodessa has a +4 racial bonus on grapple checks.

Powerful Bite (Ex) A rhagodessa's bite is always a secondary attack, yet the powerful muscles in its jaws allow it to apply 1.5 times its Strength modifier to damage rolls with it.

Feats A rhagodessa gains Multiattack and Spring Attack as bonus feats.

Treasure: A DC 25 Search check uncovers the skeletal body of a long-dead kuo-toa explorer, obscured by the swarm of vermin (if the vermin are disposed of, the body is automatically discovered). Most of the kuo-toa's gear has rotted away, but glittering on one of its skeletal fingers is a coral *ring of evasion*.

PART THREE: CITY OF MADNESS

Miles beneath the Isle of Dread's central mesa and the ruins of ancient Thanaclan festers a cavity in the endless rock. There, over the course of eons, the aboleths raised their profane, half-living city: Golismorga. For uncountable centuries they worked their foul plots, lit only by the unhealthy violet light of the Pillars of Y'chak, until the Olman people came to the land above. And with the aid of their god of rain, they drove the water from the city.

For centuries, Golismorga lay unclaimed, until the koprus, led through the labyrinthine darkness by the whispers of their unholy master Demogorgon, discovered the dried and gasping ruins. In that pit of insanity, the Prince of Demons taught his favored priests how to utilize the foul creations of the aboleths and work bilestone, the secretion of unfathomable beings known as Elder Evils. Koprus have haunted Golismorga's ruins ever since, working the will of their demon master, though harassed by seemingly endless abominable remnants of the aboleths' ancient rule.

Golismorga

Golismorga occupies a massive, 300-foot-high cavern nearly 2,000 feet across and over 3,000 feet wide, surrounded by numerous adjoining caves. Once filled completely with water, the aboleth metropolis contains structures of rock, hardened mucus, living flesh, and other even more alien materials. When the ancient Olmans unleashed *Tlaloc's Tear* upon the city, the banished waters not only drove out the aboleths but ruined many of the city's structures, which used the water for support. Stone buildings have partially collapsed, and organic edifices have gasped, rotted, and suffered centuries-long declines, growing thick with mold and infection.

Golismorga is a terrible ruin of stone rubble, rampant fungi, and great hunks of black, fleshy resin too foul to decay. After their encounter with N'glothnoru or the use of divination spells, the PCs likely have one of two objectives in mind—an assault on the kopru-held section of the ruins, or a seek-and-destroy mission to *Tlaloc's Tear*. While both locations are relatively close by, the mazelike nature of the ruins means that making these treks by foot takes three times as long. Flight makes travel only slightly easier, as the city's gnarled spires and fleshy appendages twist at impossible angles as they claw toward the cavern ceiling.

K. Entrance to Golismorga

Elevation: 10,500 feet below sea level
Distance from the Hall of the Dreamers: 6 miles

Within this immense cavern broods a realm of gigantic polyps and intricate fungi so large and elaborate that they seem almost to compliment the twisted towers, temples, the myriad constructions of an insane city. Ruined citadels of cyclopean grandeur tangle amid spires that look to have been grown rather than built—homes for beings with unspeakable forms. Senseless bridges reach to suicide heights, dropping away into squamous slums and melted ghettoes. Seemingly accidental avenues and inaccessible alleys form an unfathomable maze, a labyrinth that stretches to the subterranean horizon. Across it all bulge images of gnarled, tentacled things and red domes that glisten like unblinking, demoniac eyes. The already stale air has grown foul and close in this place, as if the smell of rot was somehow trying to crowd out the final gasp of freshness reaching these forsaken depths.

Bursting from the demented cityscape, three titanic columns of unearthly violet flame churn silently like the pillars of some gigantic temple, bathing the entire cavern in a nauseating violet light—a light that

seems somehow more horrible than the darkness that lurks at the edges of this nightmare grotto.

The cavernous ledge is approximately 200 feet from the cavern floor. Eroded smooth, the walls are difficult to climb, requiring a DC 27 Climb check to traverse without aid.

L. Secondary Entrances

Four additional entrances exist into Golismorga at each location marked "L" on the map. These tunnels eventually lead back to the Cerulean Curtain, arriving at points where the caves are flooded. Little but monstrous vermin dwell in these tunnels.

M. Deep Entrances

These four lower passageways connect to Golismorga via deep rents in the cavern floor (area N). These passageways lead even deeper into the Underdark, often leading to smaller abandoned aboleth outposts similar to (but smaller than) Golismorga. These passages become flooded once they reach the Cerulean Curtain, and lead on from there to undersea exits.

N. Chasms

Four deep chasms drop away from the cave floor in Golismorga. These chasms vary from one hundred to three hundred feet deep, and allow access to the deep entrances to the cavern. Ropers, monstrous vermin, and climbing oozes are common in these foul depths.

O. Pillars of Y'chak

Four violet columns of churning fire light Golismorga (although the fourth is set in a side cavern to the northwest). These magical pillars of fire are ancient aboleth creations that survived the detonation of *Tlaloc's Tear*, and still provide an unearthly light. These eldritch columns of fire are monuments to one of the Elder Evils, an entity called Y'chak who, unlike the majority of Elder Evils, takes an active interest in the ruin of civilization. The fact that these monuments survived the ruin of Golismorga is not coincidental.

The pillars of Y'chak radiate a cold, nauseating aura. Any creature that approaches within 50 feet of one of these pillars must make a DC 30 Fortitude save to resist becoming nauseated for 2d6 rounds. A creature that enters one of the pillars must make a DC 30 Fortitude save each round to avoid being destroyed; a creature slain by the fires of Y'chak can only be restored to life by *miracle*, *true resurrection*, or *wish*. The denizens of Golismorga have long since learned to avoid the pillars.

P. Tlaloc's Crater

This area is detailed in Part Four.

Q. Holashner's Ziggurat

This area is detailed in Part Five.

Other Encounters in Golismorga

The ruins of Golismorga are extensive, and far from safe. Rather than detail numerous keyed encounter locations, this section provides several encounters that could occur anywhere in the ruins. These encounters have been left fairly undetailed, so you can expand upon them as you wish, tailoring them to your campaign. The PCs should have at least one encounter before they reach either destination if they head directly to Tlaloc's Crater or Holashner's Ziggurat.

Evidence of Life

As the PCs explore, they witness ever more evidence of Golismorga's oppidan dementia. While not immediately dangerous, the party randomly (roll 1d4) sees one of the following: (1) A monstrous tongue, split in a triple fork, rolls from a structure's fleshy abscess, licks the red domes upon its surface, then recoils; (2) a great pillar of violet flame nearly 60 feet high appears in the PCs' path, burns for 3 rounds, then vanishes; (3) a two-story-tall lung heaves on the side of a structure, gasping irregularly; (4) the walls of a building are alive with cilia that retract if the PCs touch them, causing the building to growl.

Kopru Scouts (EL 10)

The koprus dwelling near Holashner's Ziggurat regularly send groups into the surrounding ruins, both to patrol for intruders and to seek ancient magic. Each of these scouting parties consists of four koprus and eight dominated troglodyte slaves. Each pair of slaves bear a single kopru on a leathery palenquin. If these scouts detect the PCs, they attempt to dominate them and bring them before their leader for questioning. Alternatively, if the PCs are stealthy, they might follow the koprus back to their redoubt at Holashner's Ziggurat. In all, there are two bands of kopru scouts active in Golismorga; once they are defeated, the PCs face no more koprus until they near Holashner's Ziggurat.

A kopru is only humanoid from the torso up. It's lower body is eellike, with a tail consisting of three powerful flukes, each ending in a cruel hook. The creature's taloned hands are webbed, and its head is that of a horrible large-eyed fish with facial tentacles surrounding a pucker-like maw filled with tiny sharp teeth.

KOPRUS (4) **CR 6**

CE Medium monstrous humanoid
Monster Manual II 134
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Aquan, Olman

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13
hp 36 (8 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9

Spd 5 ft., swim 40 ft.
Melee tail slap +10 (1d6+2) and 2 claws +8 (1d4+1) and bite +8 (1d4+1)
Base Atk +8; **Grp** +17
Atk Options constrict 3d6+3, improved grab (tail slap)
Special Actions dominate person (DC 16)

Abilities Str 15, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ amphibious
Feats Ability Focus (dominate person), Iron Will, Multiattack
Skills Concentration +8, Escape Artist +8, Move Silently +6, Search +4, Swim +10
Possessions coral holy symbol of Demogorgon worth 50 gp

Dominate Person (Su) A kopru can attempt to dominate person once per day, as the spell (CL 10th), save that the range is 180

feet and the duration is eight days. A DC 16 Will save resists the domination. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Improved Grab (Ex) If a kopru hits a target its own size or smaller with a tail slap, it can attempt to start a grapple as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If it establishes a hold, it can constrict. A kopru has a +7 racial bonus on grapple checks.

Troglodytes (8): hp 13 each; *Monster Manual* 246.

Scholarly Devourer (EL 11)

An ancient devourer named Rakis-Ka came to Golismorga several months ago and became fascinated by the ruins. He is particularly interested in the lore of the Elder Evils, and hopes to discover a way to feed upon and draw power from the endless essences of these godlike beings. It's likely he notices the PCs' entrance into Golismorga and seeks them out to discover what they know of the Elder Evils and arrogantly converse about what he has learned (little more than the beings' names and what structures the aboleth built to honor them, see page 27 of *Lords of Madness*). You can use an encounter with Rakis-Ka to help guide the PCs toward Holashner's Ziggurat or Tlaloc's Crater if they need some direction but regardless of how amenably the PCs conduct themselves, the devourer is tempted by the party's essences and stalks them not long after they part ways, intent on consuming at least one of their souls.

Rakis-Ka, devourer: hp 78; *Monster Manual* 58.

Screaming Buildings

A blood-curdling scream rises from some distant place within the city. A moment later, the sound echoes back, although slightly distorted. Then again it echoes, though taking on a gurgling tone, and again, closer, even more distorted. Any PC that makes a DC 18 Listen check perceives that the "echoes" are actually coming from the fleshy buildings themselves.

Shaboath Pools (EL 12)

The PCs come to an area decorated with a pair of shallow pools of dark water. Damaged stone statues of tentacled eyes devouring stars and suns coil out of each pool. The pools are still filled with what looks like brackish water, but a character may make a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check to notice that there is something fundamentally wrong with the fluid. These waters are actually ancient constructs left behind by the aboleths, guardians crafted from their own slimy extrusions known as shaboath golems. A shapeless mass of semi-transparent sludge and water, a shaboath creates four large tentacles to crush its victims once it attacks. Largely indistinguishable from water when at rest, the constructs lay in ambush and do not attack until a non-aboleth comes within ten feet of a pool's edge. Once one activates, the other does as well, and both fight until destroyed.

SHABOATHS (2) **CR 10**

N construct (cold)

Lords of Madness 166

Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0

AC 20, touch 8, flat-footed 20

hp 60 (11 HD); **DR** 10/—

Immune acid, cold

Fort +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3

Weakness vulnerable to fire

Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee 4 slams +14 (2d10+7)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +19

Atk Options improved grab

Special Actions engulf, wall of ice

Abilities Str 25, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1

SQ watery concealment

Engulf (Ex) A shaboath can attempt to engulf a grappled opponent of its size or smaller by making a successful grapple check. Once inside, a victim takes 2d10+10 points of crushing damage per round. If the opponent cannot breathe water, it must hold its breath or begin to drown. An engulfed creature can escape by making a successful grapple check or Escape Artist check. A shaboath can engulf 1 Large, 2 Medium, 4 Small, 8 Tiny, 16 Diminutive, or 32 Fine creatures at one time.

Wall of Ice (Su) A shaboath can generate a wall of ice (as the spell, CL 20th) once per minute as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Watery Concealment (Ex) An underwater shaboath is difficult to see, and gains concealment (50% miss chance).

Sloughed Skin (EL 9)

The vibrations of the party's passage disrupt the husk of a nearby rotting building, trigging an avalanche of decaying fleshlike resin. The resulting slide is 80 feet wide with a 40-foot bury zone in the center and a 20-foot slide zone on either side. Treat this as a normal avalanche, as detailed on page 90 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, but any creature damaged by the massive amount of decaying flesh must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or contract red ache (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 292).

Wandering Brain Collector (EL 7)

When *Tlaloc's Tear* detonated, the resulting storm of Olman magic and failing aboleth incantations caused a momentary ripple in reality. In that instant, a powerful creature from the Far Realm, a hideous monster called a neh-thalggu (brain collector) was drawn into the world. The otherworldly thing

Affiliation Awards

If your PCs belong to any of the affiliations detailed in DRAGON #348's "Savage Tidings," goals exist in "The Lightless Depths" that can increase their affiliation score. Each of the following criterions grants an affiliation score modifier of +1.

Church of the Whirling Fury: Rescue Jakara from Laogroat.

The Dawn Council: Establish safe passage from Emraag the Glutton.

The Scarlet Brotherhood: Deliver someone suffering from vile rigidity for use as research.

The Seekers: Donate the bilestone-encased unfinished *shadow pearls* to Seeker holdings.

The Witchwardens: Collect rubbings or sketches of several ruined aboleth master glyphs from Golismorga.

Zelkarune's Horns: Salvage a dead brain collector or the bilewretch of Holashner as an exotic trophy.

lingered in Golismorga for a time, feasting on the aboleths' terrified skum servants and eventually spawning countless young. The original neh-thalggu had long since departed Golismorga even before the koprus settled here, but its spawn have lingered in the city over the centuries, seeking brains even as they desire to stay near *Tlaloc's Tear*, hoping it might again open a way to their terrifying home.

Brain Collector: hp 85; see Appendix.

Worm Food (EL 12)

A dull grinding noise resonates from around a corner. Investigation reveals the body of a gigantic purple worm, its body pinned to the ground by a terrible building with a bulbous black exterior riddled with gill-like gashes. The building seems to have partially collapsed on the massive predator, but the way rows of pale, cartilaginous steeples have fallen make it look more like the structure bit down on the worm as it slithered by. Unable to escape and slowly bleeding to death, the worm vents its primal rage on any creature that comes within its reach. Although it cannot move, the purple worm can make full use of its attacks upon anything that stumbles in reach of its bite or sting.

Wounded Purple Worm: hp 200 (currently 120); *Monster Manual* 211.

PART FOUR: TLALOC'S CRATER

A wide crater in the shattered cavern floor has become an abscess for all the pungent fluids that seep and bleed from the alien city. Rent as if by some great impact, the cracked depression blossoms with sickly molds and tumid blue and white mushrooms several heads taller than a full-grown man. Languid veins of mucus trickle down the sides of the crater to pool at the basin's floor, leaving only a small patch of fractured earth undespoiled. At the crater's bottom sits the ten-foot-wide stone head of a reptilian creature with bulging eyes, a forked tongue, and a headdress of feathers and spikes. The stone head is cracked and damaged, and as the black sludge pools around the stump of its neck it sizzles and evaporates into swirling blue-green wisps of vapor.

When the priests of Thanaclan sought to purge Golismorga, they used their great magic to bore a shaft directly from their city into the aboleths' realm below, puncturing the roof of the cavern directly above this point. They then sent *Tlaloc's Tear* hurtling into the depths, accompanied by their greatest warriors and priests. Moving into position over the center of the dread city, the terrible weapon of the god of rain worked its potent magic, driving all the water from Golismorga and holding it back indefinitely. Its initial purpose fulfilled, the artifact spiraled into the collapsing city below, striking the trembling cavern floor with the force of its deific creator's might and opening a sizable crater upon impact. *Tlaloc's Tear* has remained there for centuries.

Tlaloc's crater is 150 feet across and 50 feet deep. Its sides angle at a 45° slope, requiring a DC 10 Climb check to traverse. The crater floor is strewn with rubble and counts as difficult terrain. The fungi and bilious secretions that trickle down the walls of the crater here are as dangerous as they are disgusting. The patches of mold, despite their noxious green hue, react to motion as yellow mold (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 76). The rivulets of corruption are ripe with disease—anyone who touches the stuff must make a DC 14 Fortitude save or contract slimy doom (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 292). The pool of infectious ooze at the crater's base is five feet deep.

The stone head at the center of the crater can be identified with a DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check as the head of Tlaloc, the Olman god of rain.

Creatures: The koprus know of this site and the strange magic that lingers within, but have been deterred from investigating it more thoroughly by a horror beyond reasoning that dwells within. This is an immense neh-thalggu, one of the original spawn of the alien that visited this site over ten centuries ago. After a millennium of studying the ripples of magic energy around *Tlaloc's Tear*, this gigantic brain collector believes that, given a few more short decades, it will have determined the method of awaking the ancient artifact to rend time and space again, allowing it to return to its true home and complete its transformation into a monster of epic potential.

Until that point, the neh-thalggu guards this site with a horrific tenacity.

NEH-THALGGU SCION **CR 14**

Advanced brain collector loremaster 4
CE Huge aberration
Dungeon Master's Guide 191, Page 64
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +22, Spot +2
Languages Aboleth, Neh-thalggu; telepathy 60 ft.

AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 20
hp 242 (257 with *false life*, 20 HD); **DR** 5/magic
Immune critical hits, disease, poisok
Fort +14, **Ref** +7, **Will** +17

Spd 60 ft.
Melee bite +25 (4d8+18)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +14; **Grp** +34
Special Actions extract brain, metamagic
Spells Prepared (CL 10th, +25 touch, +14 ranged touch)
- 5th (5/day)—*cone of cold* (DC 25), *hold monster* (DC 25), *telekinesis* (DC 25)
- 4th (7/day)—*bestow curse* (DC 24), *dimension door*, *confusion* (DC 24), *greater invisibility*
- 3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic*, *fly*, *haste*, *tongues*, *vampiric touch*
- 2nd (8/day)—*detect thoughts* (DC 22), *false life*, *ghoul touch* (DC 22), *mirror image*, *resist energy*, *see invisibility*, *web* (DC 22)
- 1st (9/day)—*comprehend languages*, *expeditious retreat*, *grease* (DC 21), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*, *true strike*
- 0 (6/day)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 20), *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 20)

Abilities Str 35, Dex 12, Con 26, Int 20, Wis 16, Cha 30
SQ otherworldly physiology, no breath, loremaster lore +9, loremaster secrets (weapon trick, dodge trick)

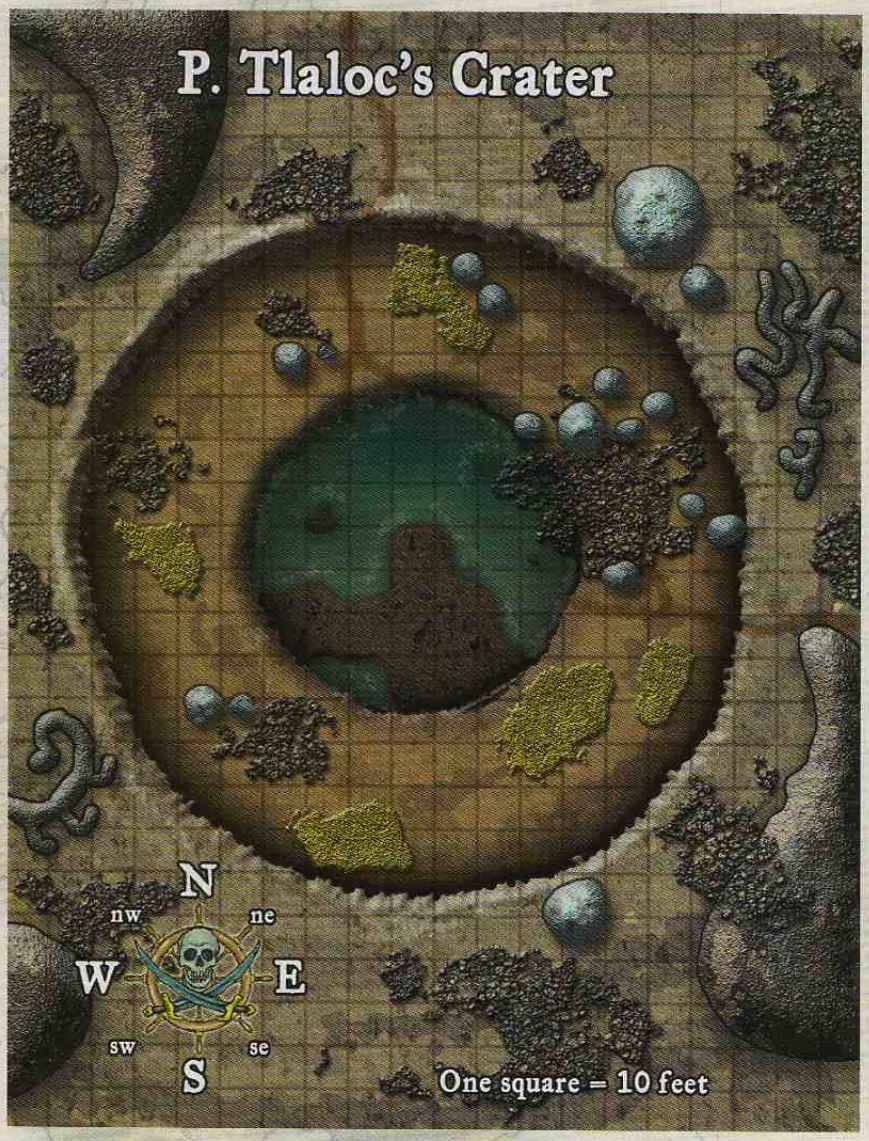
Feats Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Maximize Spell, Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana]), Widen Spell

Skills Concentration +27, Hide +12, Jump +43, Knowledge (arcana) +27, Knowledge (the planes) +24, Listen +22, Spellcraft +26

Tactics: The neh-thalggu scion spends most of its time at the bottom of the crater, endlessly studying *Tlaloc's Tear*. It emerges only to defend its territory or to seek out new brains, hoping that one of its meals might some day possess useful knowledge for how the artifact works. The creature starts each day by casting extended *mage armor* and *false life* spells on itself, and if it has a chance to prepare for combat, also casts *greater invisibility, see invisibility, fly, shield, haste,* and *mirror image.*

The aberration knows that the ooze and fungi in its crater are dangerous to other creatures, and often moves through the mold patches to trigger explosions of spores, or uses *telekinesis* to hurl foes into the diseased ooze. The brain collector doesn't pause to extract brains unless it can do so safely or if it desperately needs a new spell to handle an unexpected situation; the monster's ability to effectively relearn spells on the fly by absorbing brains gives it a unique degree of magical diversity.

In any event, the neh-thalggu has little interest in perishing when it's only a few perceived decades away from ascension. If brought below 40 hit points, it attempts to flee via *dimension door*, returning in 1d4 hours to check on the situation in the crater. If it realizes the PCs wish to destroy *Tlaloc's Tear*, though, it fights to the death to protect what it believes to be the key to its apotheosis.



Destroying Tlaloc's Tear

While few would mistake the Olman god of rain and fertility for a sympathetic deity, Tlaloc is ferocious in protecting his worshippers. When Thanaclan offered prayer and bountiful sacrifice to their gods for a solution to the threat of Golismorga, Tlaloc answered by speaking to his high priest through the head of one of his statues. He told this priest he must take this head and deliver it unto the enemy, and thence Tlaloc would speak to them.

Tlaloc's Tear is this head, a stone representation of Tlaloc's reptilian visage upon which seem to swirl all the colors of the rain and sea. The artifact's sole purpose was the creation of the Cerulean Curtain that drove the waters from Golismorga and disrupted the mental control the aboleths had over their enslaved armies. Today, the *Tear* serves only as an anchor for the curtain, and as long as the Cerulean Curtain exists, it also anchors *Tlaloc's Tear*. It cannot be moved, physically or magically, from this location.

Yet time and the eldritch influence of the brooding alien city around it have worn upon its visage and strength. The head is cracked in some places and appears to be crumbling away to dust in others. Once indestructible, *Tlaloc's Tear* is now practically begging for release from its ancient duty. The head can be destroyed by enough physical damage, and has no particular protection against spells like *stone shape*. As a result, destroying the Cerulean Curtain's anchor is surprisingly simple.

As soon as *Tlaloc's Tear* is destroyed, the ever-present whispers suddenly rise to a crescendo and then fall silent as the Cerulean Curtain parts and an entire ocean of water is released from a millineum-long restraint. Walls of seawater cascade down through the tunnels, discernable at first as a distant rumbling with a DC 20 Listen check. For the next

three hours, earth tremors increasingly shake the city of Golismorga (Reflex DC 12 to avoid being knocked prone) as this low rumbling increases in volume until finally the four upper entrances (area **K**) transform into tumultuous waterfalls. While the PCs might fear that they must now rush to complete any remaining objectives, this is something of a misconception. Entire mazes must refill below Golismorga before it becomes a drowned city once again. From the point at which *Tlaloc's Tear* is destroyed, the PCs have approximately 16 hours to escape the city before being forced to deal with dangerously rising waters.

A greater potential threat lies in the reawakening of the dozens of slumbering aboleths in the caverns surrounding Golismorga. Within minutes of the waters rushing over their dried bodies, they awaken from their long sleep. Lethargic and with only enough water to make the barest movements, by the time Golismorga is once again flooded, the aboleth have already begun the grim task of reclaiming their ancient home. They may recognize that they have the PCs to thank for their salvation, or they may not—in either event, these hateful alien fish see any intruders in Golismorga (PCs included) as fit for slavery at best.

Tlaloc's Tear: 5 ft. thick; Hardness 8; hp 450.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: For destroying *Tlaloc's Tear* and flooding Golismorga, give the PCs a CR 12 experience award.

PART FIVE: THE HEART OF MADNESS

The koprus have carved out a small demesne of their own along the eastern wall of Golismorga, centered on an ancient aboleth ziggurat first viewed by their religious leaders in visions granted them by Demogorgon. The bulk of the fragmented kopru empire is not to be found here, nor in the ruins of Thanaclan on Taboo Island above (see "City of Broken Idols" in the next issue of DUNGEON)—they dwell in flooded caverns elsewhere under the Isle of Dread, close enough to the surface that they can visit as needed.

Holashner's Ziggurat is a 140-foot-wide ziggurat. It was here, long ago, that the aboleth kept repositories of bilestone to honor Holashner, one of the Elder Evils. This bilestone, transformed back into its liquid state by an ancient abomonation created by the aboleth long ago for expressly this purpose, was precisely what Demogorgon needed to complete the creation of the *shadow pearls*.

Very few koprus are allowed into the ziggurat. Currently, 38 normal koprus, 16 hulking kopru behemoths, 10 dark nagas the koprus have allied with, and 70 enslaved troglodytes dwell in the ruins immediately surrounding the ziggurat. The koprus have created numerous pools of water (using a *decanter of endless water*) to serve them as shelters where they can dwell comfortably outside their preferred aquatic environment. They find the surrounding architecture of Golismorga strangely soothing, yet have not done much to explore the ruins. Demogorgon's will brought them to the ziggurat, but they dare not stray far (with the exception of the two scouting parties detailed in Part Three). As a result, it's difficult for the PCs to whittle away at the creatures' ranks. Any alarm quickly rouses all the inhabitants of the community, and while the normal kopru and half the behemoths move to engage the invaders, the remaining behemoths rush to reinforce those already stationed at Holashner's Ziggurat. Ulioth emerges from within the ziggurat quickly to join the battle.

An easier way to infiltrate Holashner's Ziggurat is to create a massive distraction—such as that suggested by N'glothnoru. The destruction of *Tlaloc's Tear* sends the kopru into a panic. Ulioth immediately sends all the behemoths (except those guarding the ziggurat) to areas where they know dried aboleth linger, hoping to kill the aberrations before the coming waters waken them. The rest of the koprus and all of the dark nagas are sent into the ruins and the surrounding caverns on a multitude of tasks in hopes of discovering the reason for the flooding and stemming it. A small contingent is even ordered to report the flooding to the kopru's masters on the plateau above. When the PCs arrive in this vicinity after destroying *Tlaloc's Tear*, they find the place unguarded save for what few behemoths wait for them on and in the ziggurat itself.

Koprus (38): hp 36 each; see page 54.

Kopru Behemoths (16): hp 102 each; see page 60.

Dark Nagas (10): hp 58 each; *Monster Manual* 191.

Troglodytes (70): hp 13 each; *Monster Manual* 246.

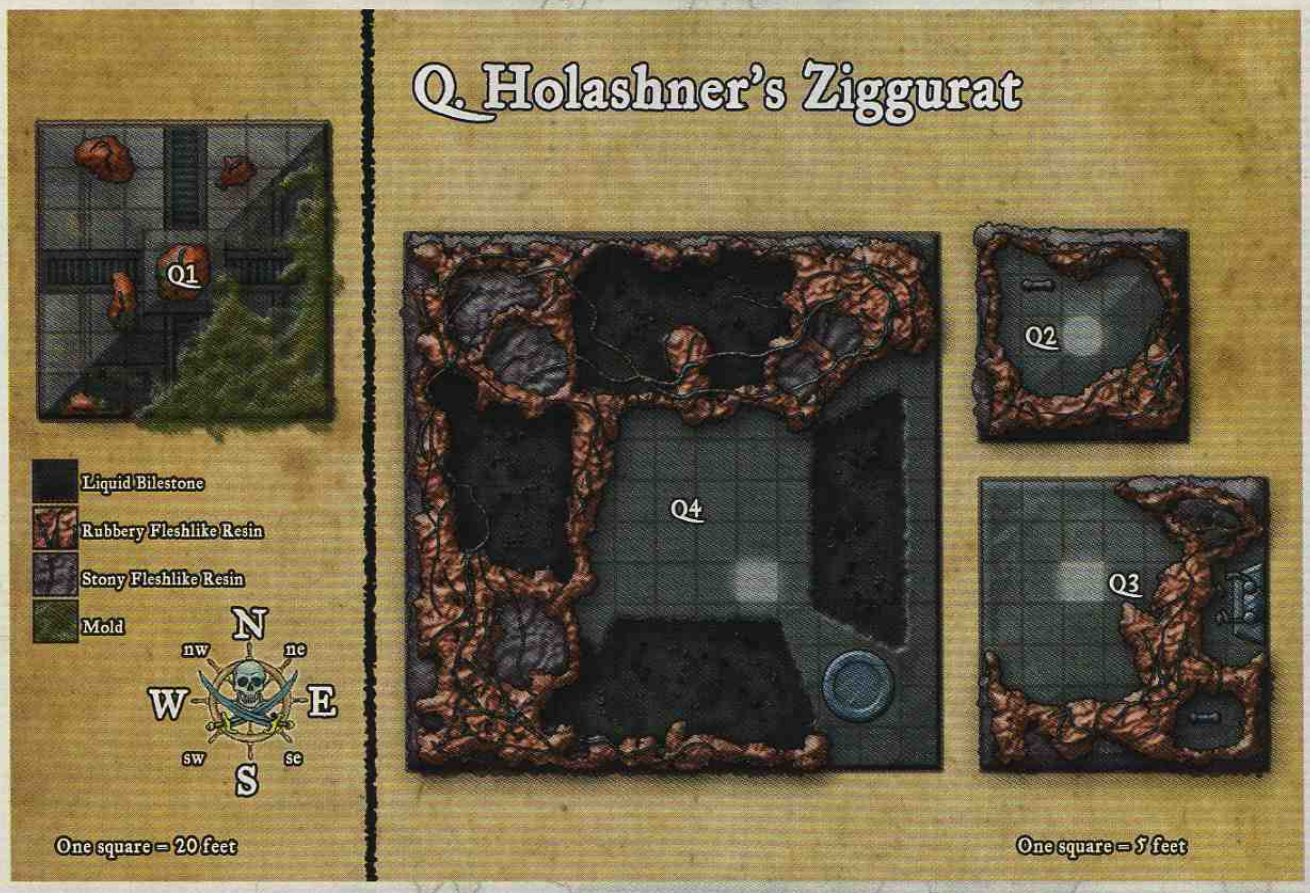
Holashner's Ziggurat

A parasite gnawing through the vitals of the world, the Elder Evil Holashner, the Hunger Below, endlessly feeds its cosmic hunger in the unfathomable depths below the Underdark. Where this godthing passes, it excretes a fluid foulness known as the black bile of the world. Terrible beyond mortal understanding and profane beyond the capacity of most deities, Holashner is held in high regard by the aboleths, who dedicate great monuments to his name. Holashner's Ziggurat is one such monument.

Once a half-living tower of purple flesh oozing black bile of the world, the koprus have perverted the ziggurat to Demogorgon's needs, covering it with stone quarried from the surrounding caves and etching it with unholy runes. The place is now a doubly profane monument dedicated to The Hunger Below and the Prince of Demons.

Q1. Ziggurat Exterior (EL 13)

Amid ruined towers of melted stone and malls of quivering ooze, a wide area lies clear of rubble and less wholesome debris. From these cleared acres rises a stone pyramid that looks out of place from the surrounding madness, its dimensions having the look of lucid design and bearing comforting right angles of masonry. The sides of the ziggurat are festooned with detailed carvings of reptilian and simian monsters wrapped and cradled in endless coils of tentacles. Steep steps rise into the darkened, noxious cavern air to a simple platform at the ziggurat's summit. Not all seems right, though, as several cracks mar the pyramid's masonry, revealing



sections of diseased purple flesh within. In addition, two sides of the pyramid look to be partially overgrown, covered in putrid swaths of pale green mold. In places, great slicks of tacky, dried blood stain the ziggurat's sides.

A DC 25 Knowledge (the planes) check identifies the monster and tentacle motifs that decorate the ziggurat as associated with Demogorgon. At the summit, it becomes evident that the koprus have not finished their work of encasing the original organic structure in stone, as bruised, purple flesh quivers beneath gaps in the stonework. The bloodstains that mar the ziggurat's sides are all that remains of the countless slaves the koprus have collected from the troglodytes in exchange for the *shadow pearls*. Sacrificed atop the ziggurat to Demogorgon, their mortal remains have been eaten.

Those who examine the stepped pyramid closely quickly notice that the structure is no mere building, but a shell of masonry over a semi-living aboleth creation. The fleshy interior building possesses an animalistic form of intelligence, functioning more in terms of instinct than thought. The building even has a system of brainlike organs that are susceptible to mind-affecting spells and effects, allowing its masters to make demands of the place directly. Sharing a similar power to an aboleths' enslave ability, the koprus found themselves uniquely suited to usurp their predecessor's control. This control is far from perfect, but it's enough that this building has finally accepted the koprus as inhabitants, even if the mold and the city itself have not.

Foul green mold grows over much of the southwestern side of the ziggurat. Not seen anywhere else in the city, this mold has the same properties as green slime, dissolving any organic material it touches, with the exception of the fleshy resin of aboleth buildings. Even stone slowly succumbs to the ooze, becoming pockmarked and melted as it dissolves at a near geological rate. The koprus have no explanation for the presence of this mold, yet many fear that the city itself grows tired of their intrusion. A DC 30 Knowledge (nature) check is enough to reveal that the mold is unlike any other known fungus, and that it is closely related to green slime. Creatures that enter a square covered in this mold are affected as if they entered a square of green slime (see page 76 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). Despite the strangeness of the mold, however, it can be affected by *diminish plants* and *remove disease*, which destroys 5 feet of the mold per caster level. Fire also swiftly consumes the mold, with 5 points of fire damage destroying a 5-foot square.

In scaling the pyramid, the PCs are likely to come across several areas where the masonry of the ziggurat's exterior is incomplete or has cracked and fallen away. Through the thick layer of stone twitches the live, plum-colored flesh of the true structure beneath, a living incubator for black bile of the world. PCs that investigate such a crack are likely to see partially exposed gills, black animalistic

eyes, slits like wide, toothless mouths, and stranger features. Every square foot of exposed flesh has hardness 2 and 10 hit points, but heals at an incredible rate, as if it had fast healing 5. Damaging the flesh causes the entire structure to quiver (not so much as to throw one off balance) and causes a muffled, unsettling whining to issue from someplace deep within the structure's innards. The barrier of flesh between the structure's interior and the outside is 8 feet thick.

At the apex of the pyramid waits the entrance to the chambers within—a domelike bulge of constricted, bruise-colored muscle. Slightly tougher than the surrounding flesh (hardness 4 and 15 hit points per foot) and with the same fast healing, the barrier is difficult to breach. The entrance is air-tight when closed, preventing entry via *gaseous form*. There are several ways to open the passage. Any compulsion mind-affecting effect, such as *suggestion* or *dominate person*, that targets the barrier can command it to open (language is not a factor in this usage). The passage remains open until it is ordered to close in the same way.

Alternately, a DC 24 Search check reveals four deep circular fissures that break the surface of the flesh around the barrier. These sickening, woundlike rents protect muscled pads. If all four are depressed at the same time, the organic "door" reflexively snaps open. The fourth of these fissures is obscured by green mold, which must be destroyed if the PCs are to safely employ it.

Finally, the organic door has a Strength score of 36. A creature that succeeds on an opposed Strength check against the door can force it open as a full-round action.

Once the door is open, its a 15-foot drop to the floor of area **Q2** below.

Creatures: Ulioth has stationed three powerful kopru behemoths at the ziggurat's peak as guards. They have orders to keep watch over the ziggurat and prevent all creatures from disturbing their master's work, and unlike the other kopru, remain here even if the cavern begins flooding after the destruction of *Tlaloc's Tear*.

Kopru Behemoths (3) **CR 10**

CE Large monstrous humanoid
Monster Manual II 134
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages Aquan, Olman

AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 20
hp 102 (12 HD)
Fort +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +10

Spd 5 ft., swim 40 ft.
Melee* tail slap +15 (1d8+14) and 2 claws +13 (1d6+9) and bite +13 (1d6+9)
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +32
Atk Options constrict 3d8+13, improved grab (tail slap)
Special Actions dominate person
Combat Gear *potion of fly* (3)
*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 28, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12
SQ amphibious
Feats Ability Focus (dominate person), Improved Bull Rush, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack
Skills Escape Artist +17, Move Silently +17, Swim +17
Possessions combat gear, *+3 studded leather armor*, coral holy symbol of Demogorgon worth 50 gp

Dominate Person (Su) A kopru can attempt to dominate person once per day, as the spell (CL 10th), save that the range is 180 feet and the duration is eight days. A DC 17 Will save resists the domination. The save DC is Charisma-based.
Improved Grab (Ex) If a kopru hits a target its own size or smaller with a tail slap, it can attempt to start a grapple as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If it establishes a hold, it can constrict. A kopru has a +7 racial bonus on grapple checks.

Tactics: If enemies attempt to climb the pyramid, the behemoths drink *potions of fly* and move to engage the PCs in melee. A favored tactic against climbing intruders is using Improved Bull Rush to force them into the green mold.

Development: The cavern ceiling 200 feet above the ziggurat has been shaped via a *stone shape* spell. A DC 30 Search check of this section of ceiling reveals a 10-foot-square area with a strangely smooth surface. A DC 25 Spellcraft check reveals that this area was created by *wall of stone*. This *wall of stone* is 15 feet thick, and plugs the entrance to a vertical shaft that eventually connects to the same shaft the ancient Olmans used to deliver *Tlaloc's Tear* so long ago. After they did, the Olmans sealed both ends of the shaft, but the kopru above and below reopened them to allow delivery of partially completed *shadow pearls* from the City of Broken Idols above down to Golismorga below. Ulioth uses *stone shape* to open and close this plug as necessary whenever the kopru from above arrive with a new shipment of half-finished *shadow pearls*.

It's unlikely that the PCs discover this route into Thanaclan at this time, but if they do, refer to the next adventure in the Savage Tide Adventure Path to determine what they encounter along the way.

Q2. The Room That Watches

This room is alive. The bruised purple walls pulse and quiver, heaving irregularly like the breath of a dying thing. Growths jut from the walls—exposed, fleshy things like black lungs, giant many-chambered and inside-out hearts, rolling milky white eyes, and other organs with no humanoid analog. Unfinished stonework covers patches of the floor, as if some optimistic architect hoped to merely brick over the room's obscene nature. An open chute with a strange ladder, its rungs curved and awkwardly placed, opens through part of the masonry floor, descending deeper into the structure's depths.

This room is both guard post and guardian. Several of the eyes positioned throughout the room watch all who enter. Unless the PCs are invisible or otherwise disguise their entry, the structure becomes aware of intruders and reports the intrusion to Ulioth in area **Q3** below, at which point he begins casting spells to prepare himself for any coming conflict. The ladder is optomized

for a snakelike creature like a kopru. Humanoid creatures must make a DC 10 Climb check to navigate it.

Z3. Corrupted Shrine (EL 14)

The ziggurat's organs continue to twitch, roil, and watch. The half-laid stonework glistens amid pools of water. To the east looms a huge bust of a demonic countenance with twin baboonlike heads set in a fearsome double roar sprouting from its over-muscled chest. Across the ground lie hunks of shattered black resin and, near the statue, a black tumor grows from the fleshy floor, its size and shape reminiscent of some grotesque divan.

The religious leader of the Golismorga koprus, Ulioth, oversees the final stage of the creation of *shadow pearls* from this room, spending much of his time offering prayer to his demonic overlord or toiling on his latest project, a half-completed *strand of prayer beads*.

A stone trapdoor with a broad iron ring is set in the masonry of the floor near the statue of Demogorgon, opening into area **Q4** below.

Creature: Ulioth, the leader of the koprus in Golismorga, spends much of his time meditating on Demogorgon's will, receiving visions and direction from the Prince of Demons himself. If the PCs have managed to reach this area undetected, they find Ulioth resting upon his throne of tumors. More likely, though, the kopru cleric knows of the PCs' intrusion and has already prepared for their arrival as detailed in Tactics below.

Ulioth

ULIOTH **CR 14**

Male kopru cleric 8/thrall of Demogorgon 4
CE Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic)
Monster Manual II 134, *Book of Vile Darkness* 66
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +4, Spot +4
Languages Aboleth, Abyssal, Aquan, Olman

AC 27, touch 14, flat-footed 26
hp 170 (20 HD)
Fort +15, **Ref** +10, **Will** +19

Spd 5 ft., swim 40 ft.
Melee +2 *anarchic spear* +23/+18/+13/+8 (1d8+6/19–20/×3) and tail slap +20 (1d6+2) and bite +20 (1d4+2)
Base Atk +18; **Grp** +28
Atk Options ignore hardness 1/day, reaching touch 3/day
Special Actions dominate person, hypnosis 1/day, rebuke undead 5/day (+2, 2d6+10), touch of fear 3/day
Combat Gear *potion of blur, potion of resist acid 10, wand of cure moderate wounds* (12 charges)
Spells Prepared (CL 10th, +21 touch, +19 ranged touch)
5th—*feeblemind*[D] (DC 21), *greater command* (DC 21), *spell resistance, wall of stone*
4th—*air walk, control water, cure critical wounds, dimensional anchor*[D], *sending*
3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 19), *contagion*[D] (DC 19), *cure serious wounds, dispel magic, protection from energy*
2nd—*blindness/deafness*[D] (DC 18), *bull's strength, cure moderate wounds* (2), *death knell* (DC 18), *shatter* (DC 18), *silence* (DC 18)
1st—*command* (DC 17), *cure light wounds, divine favor, doom*[D] (DC 17), *entropic shield, protection from good, sanctuary* (DC 17)

0—*create water* (3), *cure moderate wounds*, *guidance*, *light*

D domain spell; **Domains** Corruption, Demonic

Abilities Str 16, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 23, Cha 14

SQ amphibious, dual actions 2/day, spontaneous casting (inflict spells)

Feats Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Critical (spear), Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Multiattack, Thrall to Demon (Demogorgon), Willing Deformity

Skills Concentration +14, Escape Artist +11, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (religion) +8, Knowledge (the planes) +6

Possessions *+4 chain shirt*, *+2 anarchic spear*, *periapt of Wisdom +4*, *ring of protection +3*, *bracers of health +2* (as *amulet of health +2*), *portable hole* filled with cold, brackish water, gold unholy symbol of Demogorgon worth 500 gp

Dominate Person (Su) A kopru can attempt to dominate person once per day, as the spell (CL 10th), save that the range is 180 feet and the duration is eight days. A DC 16 Will save resists the domination. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Dual Actions (Su) Twice per day, Ulioth can take two full rounds' worth of actions in the same round.

Hypnosis (Su) Once per day, Ulioth can produce an effect identical to that of the *hypnotism* spell, except that it functions as a gaze attack with a range of 30 feet. A DC 16 Will save negates this effect; the save DC is Charisma-based.

Improved Grab (Ex) If Ulioth hits a target its own size or smaller with a tail slap, he can attempt to start a grapple as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If he establishes a hold, he can constrict. Ulioth has a +7 racial bonus on grapple checks.

Reaching Touch (Su) Three times a day, as a free action, Ulioth can cause his arms to stretch unnaturally, increasing his reach by 5 feet for 1 round.

Touch of Fear (Su) Three times per day, Ulioth can cause a creature he strikes with a touch attack to become frightened for 1d4 rounds. A DC 16 Will save means the creature touched is merely shaken for 1 round. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Domains The Corruption domain allows Ulioth to ignore a struck object's hardness once per day. The Demonic domain grants him a +1 profane bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls with unarmed strikes and natural weapons.

Feats Thrall to Demon allows Ulioth to gain a +1 luck bonus on any attack roll once per day when performing an evil act. Willing Deformity grants a +2 deformity bonus on Intimidate checks.

Tactics: As soon as Ulioth realizes the PCs are drawing near, he casts the following spells on himself: *spell resistance*, *air walk*, *protection from energy (fire)*, and *bull's strength*. Once this is done (or on the first round of combat, if the PCs reach him earlier) he uses *control water* to raise the pools of water on the floor up to the 20-foot-high ceiling, flooding the room with water so that he's more mobile while hopefully the PCs are hindered.

In combat, Ulioth prefers opening with his dual actions, making full attack actions while also moving away to cast a spell or using dominate person at range. If a battle turns against him, he retreats to area **Q4**. Once there, he uses his *potion of resist acid 10*, allowing him to swim in the pools of black bile unharmed while he heals his wounds and readies to defend the denizen of that chamber from the invaders.

Treasure: Any character who makes a DC 18 Search check of the tumorous "throne" in this room finds several of Ulioth's most prized treasures hidden amid its folds. These include a strangely shaped gold and ivory tiara of coiling snakes and shrieking monkeys worth 2,400 gp, a ruby *ring of wizardry (II)*, a *necklace of adaptation*, and a *decanter of endless water*.

In addition, the four eyes in the bust of Demogorgon are black pearls worth 500 gp each.

Q4. Holashner's Honor (EL 13)

The sticky heat and pulsing walls of this cloying room augment perfectly the revolting stink of bile mixed with crude oil. Four pools of putrid black muck bubble and spurt in the floor, their edges determined by either rigid stone blocks or dimples in the fleshy ground. Four pillars separate the pools and hold the sagging flesh of the ceiling aloft. Within the basins of roiling foulness float pristine black orbs, each the size of a man's head and shimmering with an unsettling inner light.

The construction of a *shadow pearl* is a long and involved process that begins in the ruins of Thanaclan on the plateau high above. By the time they're shipped down to Golismorga, they've already undergone a months-long creation process, yet when they finally reach this chamber they still have months to go. At this point, the *shadow pearls* are allowed to steep in the pits of black bile, building up a shell of hardened bilestone while they absorb the inherent madness festering in the leavings of an Elder Evil.

The four bubbling black pools are each 20 feet deep and filled with black bile of the world, the liquid state of bilestone. All four of the pools are connected by wide passages underground, allowing something that dives into one to rise from another—should it survive. The effects of black bile of the world are detailed in the sidebar on page 64.

Currently, a total of eight unfinished *shadow pearls* float in the four pools. They still need at least a month of steeping in the bile before their bilestone shells can be cracked open and the *shadow pearls* within are ready to release a savage tide.

Creature: A living monument to the Elder Evil known as a bilewretch of Holashner lurks in this chamber. Without this creature's presence, the bile pits would soon harden into bilestone and thus become useless for the finishing stage of *shadow pearl* creation. The monster has befriended Ulioth, and the kopru priest is thus the only creature the bilewretch suffers in this room—all other intruders are attacked at once.

Bilewretch of Holashner: hp 189; see Appendix.

Tactics: Knowing the effects of bilestone on fleshy creatures, the bilewretch stays within or above the pools of black bile in the room, making use of its breath weapon liberally and then retreating beneath the surface of a pool to emerge from another pool one or two rounds later. Should the

bilewretch be forced into melee it attempts to grapple whenever possible. Using its breath weapon on grappled opponents, the aberration also attempts to dive into the nearest pool while grappling a foe, relying on the disgusting fluid to drown or dissolve its victim.

Development: By destroying the bilewretch, the PCs can effectively disrupt the creation of *shadow pearls*. Within a day, these pools harden into bilestone and any unfinished pearls still within crack as their latent magic fades away in a noxious green puff.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

In order to disrupt the use of Golismorga as a place to finish the creation of *shadow pearls*, the PCs must both destroy the bilewretch and flood the cavern by destroying *Tlaloc's Tear*. This one-two punch throws the koprus off for months, but there remains much to do in the world above. If the PCs don't continue the fight and confront the demonic residents of Thanaclan, the powerful forces there are certain to turn their resources elsewhere. The first battle against the Lords of Dread may be won, but their demonic lord still dwells in the City of Broken Idols above.

Though it takes time for the water to completely reclaim Golismorga and the surrounding caverns, the effects of this deluge should be immediately apparent and give the PCs a sense of urgency. While many players undoubtedly prefer magical means such as *teleport*, the route the PCs used to reach Golismorga in the first place is the last tunnel to flood. The rising waters eventually reach sea level, flooding most of the caverns below the Isle of Dread once again. The refugees of Barbas were wise to flee to the upper caverns when they did.

The aboleths, freed from their long sleep, are temporarily content to reclaim their former realm, repairing the damage that time and ignorant races have done to their magnificent edifices. These alien creatures exist on timescales unfathomable to mortals, and it may be decades or even centuries before they again turn their attentions to the world above.

APPENDIX: NEW MONSTERS

Brain Collector (Neh-thalggu)

A hungry polyp upon twelve insectoid legs skitters madly across the floor. Larger than a horse, the thing's tumid mass writhes with

Black Bile of the World

A reeking fluid, thicker than oil but thinner than tar, black bile of the world is the putrid excretion of the Elder Evil Holashner. In its purest state, black bile (sometimes referred to as liquid madness) is among the foulest substances in existence. Rancid, caustic, and flamable, any creature that comes into contact with the viscous stuff takes 1d6 points of acid damage on contact and another 1d6 points of acid damage for the next 2 rounds as the ooze clings and continues to burn. A large quantity (at least a quart) of liquid can wash off the bile. Black bile radiates a strong chaotic aura and deals double damage to creatures with the lawful subtype.

Black bile is also flamable, yet not so much as to be truly explosive. Exposed to flame, a pool of black bile burns for hours without consuming its substance before the fire simply dies.

A single flask of black bile can be used as a thrown weapon like acid, dealing 1d6 points of acid damage that persists for the following 2 rounds on a direct hit, and 1 point of acid damage to all creatures in the splash radius, dealing double damage to creatures with the lawful subtype.

Long-term exposure to either black bile of the world or bilestone is thought to have all manner of corruptive effects. Only the foulest of creatures can handle the substances for any significant period without contracting evil diseases or even spontaneously bestowed curses.

stunted, whipping tentacles. A lipless mouth heavy with protruding rows of dagger-length teeth, and a ridge of four bulging eyes glares from above this nightmare gash. A cluster of twelve knots crown the abomination's misshapen form, the gray wrinkles of brains trapped within pressed against the semi-transparent membranes.

Brain Collector (Neh-thalggu) CR 7

Usually CN, NE, or CE Large aberration

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +15, Spot +2

Languages Neh-thalggu; telepathy 60 ft.

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 85 (10 HD); **DR** 5/magic

Immune critical hits, disease, poison

Fort +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +11

Spd 60 ft.

Melee bite +13 (2d8+10)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +18

Special Actions extract brain, metamagic

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 6th, +13 touch, +9 ranged touch)

3rd (4/day)—*dispel magic, displacement, fly, haste, vampiric touch*

2nd (7/day)—*detect thoughts* (DC 18), *ghoul touch* (DC 18), *invisibility, mirror image, resist energy, see invisibility*

1st (8/day)—*expeditious retreat, feather fall, grease* (DC 17), *mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shield, true strike*

0 (6/day)—*dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 16), *mage hand, prestidigitation, read magic, touch of fatigue* (DC 16)

Abilities Str 24, Dex 17, Con 18, Int 20, Wis 15, Cha 22

SQ otherworldly physiology

Feats Empower Spell, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Iron Will

Skills Concentration +17, Hide +12, Jump +32, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (any one other) +18, Listen +15, Spellcraft +20

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure double standard

Advancement 11–14 (Large), 15–30 (Huge)

Extract Brain (Ex) Using its claws with the precision of surgical tools, a brain collector can remove the brain of a helpless opponent in reach as a full-round action. This action provokes an attack of opportunity, and immediately slays the target at the end of the round. This power is useless against constructs, elementals, oozes, plants, and undead, and is not instantly fatal to foes with multiple heads, such as ettins and hydras. Once extracted, the neh-thalggu can swallow the brain as a free action, storing it in one of its twelve brain sacs.

Metamagic (Su) A brain collector can absorb a captured brain to enhance the effects of its spellcasting. While these effects resemble metamagic feats, they do not raise the effective level of the spell being cast, nor do they increase the casting time of spells that are spontaneously cast. Note that each brain absorbed removes the spell being cast from the brain collector's list of spells known—in order to "relearn" that spell, it must collect a replacement brain. When a brain collector absorbs a brain to enhance a spell, it may apply one of the following three effects to the spell being cast:

- It may cast the spell without using verbal or somatic components.
- It may cast a spell that normally has a range of touch at any distance up to 30 feet (the spell effectively becomes a ray, so the brain collector must succeed on a ranged touch attack to bestow the spell upon the recipient).
- As part of a bite attack, the brain collector may cast any spell that targets a single creature (other than a spell that targets itself only). If the bite attack is successful, the spell affects the creature bitten. Casting a spell in this manner is an immediate action (allowing the brain collector to cast a spell like this as part of an attack of opportunity), and counts as a quickened spell for determining how many spells you can cast in a round. Casting a spell in this manner does not provoke attacks of opportunity. If the bite attack fails, the spell is lost.

Otherworldly Physiology (Ex) A brain collector does not have fixed organs as most organisms do. As such, it is immune to critical hits, death from massive damage, sneak attack, and coup de grace attacks. Their alien bodies are also immune to disease and poison. Brain collectors do not age and, barring violence, can live forever.

Spells A brain collector casts spells as a 6th-level sorcerer. A brain collector can store additional spells known in its collected brains, increasing the total number of spells it knows and can cast. If it absorbs a brain, it loses one of its known spells. When it collects a new brain to replace an absorbed brain, it may select a new spell to replace the spell lost. A brain collector may know any number of spells in this manner, although the number of spells known of any particular level cannot equal or exceed the number of spells known of a lower level. The stat block above assumes a brain collector with a full complement of 12 brains.

Denizens of the madness that lurks behind reality, brain collectors (neh-

thalggu in their own insane language) encroach on the Material Plane from the inconceivable Far Realm in what is actually their larval stage. Terrible beings of unspeakable and unwholesome desires, these monsters are driven to collect brains, and use the knowledge locked within these organs to further their own transformation into beings of godlike power (*Epic Level Handbook* 207). Uncaring of the empty husks cast aside by their feeding, these alien predators use their fleshy meals to generate great bursts of arcane energy. While even the weakest are capable of devouring the sentience from whole regions, a fully ascended neh-thalggu rivals even the eldest dragons and some demon lords in ferocity and arcane might.

Bilewretch of Holashner

Many-jointed legs and squirming tentacles cloak this horror in a haze of repulsive motion. A thing half-centipede and half-squid, a single alien, black eye stares fathomlessly from an octopoid head. Curled upon itself like a titanic shrimp, the thing glistens like a scarab's shell even as it bathes itself in an endless flow of oily black drool.

Bilewretch of Holashner **CR 13**

Always CE Huge aberration

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages Aboleth (cannot speak)

AC 29, touch 13, flat-footed 24 (–2 size, +5 Dex, +16 natural)

hp 189 (18 HD)

Immune acid, fire, inhaled toxins, mind-affecting, suffocation

SR 21

Fort +12, **Ref** +13, **Will** +12

Spd 40 ft., swim 40 ft.; air walk

Melee 4 tentacles +19 (1d8+8/19–20 plus 1d6 acid) and tail +14 (2d8+4)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +13; **Grp** +29

Atk Options Combat Reflexes, Blind-Fight, black bile, constrict 2d8+4, improved grab

Special Actions breath weapon

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th) 3/day—*confusion* (DC 14), empowered *poison* (DC 16), *deeper darkness*

Abilities Str 27, Dex 20, Con 22, Int 5, Wis 13, Cha 10

SQ black bile affinity, no breath

Feats Ability Focus (*poison* spell-like ability), Combat Reflexes, Blind-Fight, Empower Spell-Like Ability (*poison*), Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Listen +8, Move Silently +12, Spot +8

Environment underground (near bilestone deposits)

Organization solitary, pair, or nest (3–8)

Treasure none

Advancement 19–27 HD (Huge), 28–40 HD (Gargantuan), 41–54 HD (Colossal)

Air Walk (Su) A bilewretch may move through the air as if under the effects of an *air walk* spell. This effect cannot be dispelled.

Black Bile (Su) A bilewretch's tentacles constantly seep black bile of the world. Any creature struck by a tentacle takes an additional 1d6 points of acid damage, and then an additional 1d6 points of acid damage the next round before the bile from that attack becomes inert. Creatures with the lawful

Scaling the Adventure

"The Lightless Depths" is designed for a group of four 11th-level characters, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 9th–10th-level or 12th-level characters. Simply adjust any NPC character levels by 1 for every level by which your party's average deviates from 11. Specific changes to the adventure include:

9th–10th-level characters: Consider removing the encounter with Emraag entirely. Replace the elder black pudding in area **C** with three standard black puddings. Reduce the number of hook horrors encountered at area **F2** to three or four. Remove one or two of the blackfang rhagodessas from area **J**. Don't use the Shaboath Pool encounter or the Worm Food encounter in Golismorga. Remove one of the kopru behemoths from area **Q1**.

12th-level characters: Advance the elder black pudding in area **C** and the roper in area **D** by 4 Hit Dice. Advance the hook horrors that guard Barbas by 4 Hit Dice, or alternately add two more to the encounter. Add another blackfang rhagodessa to area **J**. Add a dark naga to the kopru scouts in Golismorga, and advance Rakis-Ka the devourer by 4 Hit Dice. Add two dark nagas to area **Q1**, and advance the bilewretch by 4 Hit Dice.

subtype take double acid damage from this attack.

Black Bile Affinity (Ex) As a full-round action, a bilewretch can transform a 5-foot block of bilestone into black bile of the world. A bilewretch can swim through black bile unimpeded, and may see through it as if it were clear. While at least partially submerged in black bile, a bilewretch gains fast healing 15.

Breath Weapon (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds, a bilewretch can expel a 30-foot-long line of black bile of the world that deals 6d6 points of acid damage to every creature in the area. If this bile is exposed to air, it also ignites, inflicting an additional 6d6 points of fire damage. Creatures with the lawful subtype take double damage from the acid portion of this attack. A DC 25 Reflex save halves both the acid and fire damage. On the round after suffering damage from a bilewretch's breath weapon, a creature takes an additional 3d6 acid damage (6d6 for creatures with the lawful subtype) and 3d6 fire damage (Reflex DC 25 negates) as the stuff clings and continues to burn, unless the victim takes a full-round action to wash or scrape off the bile. If it chooses, a bilewretch may use its breath weapon on a single creature it is currently grappling. To do so, it must grapple the foe with at least two tentacles. If successful, it heaves bile upon the victim, inflicting damage as detailed above (no save). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Constrict (Ex) A bilewretch deals automatic tail damage on a successful grapple check with its tail.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, the bilewretch must hit with a tentacle or a tail attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it establishes a hold with its tail, it can constrict. If it establishes a hold with at least two tentacles, it can use its breath weapon against that foe as detailed above.

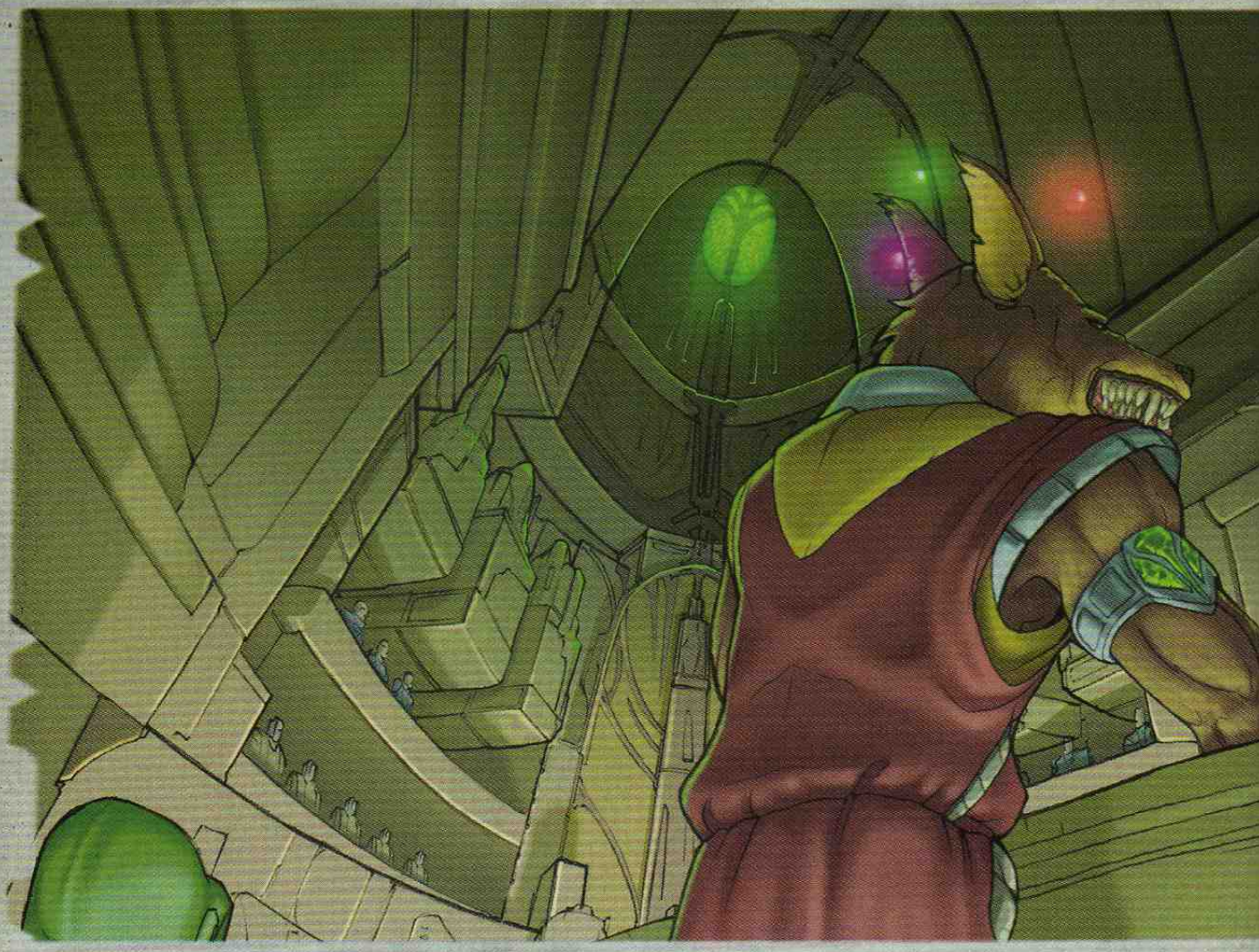
No Breath (Ex) A bilewretch does not need to breathe.

Monstrous aberrations sculpted from unknowable samples harvested eons ago from Holashner itself, bilewretches exist to perpetuate the transformation of black bile of the world into bilestone and then back again. Like an intelligent fountain, these monsters live only to endlessly break down bilestone and excrete it as liquid madness, protecting that which they have reformed. Often ordered by their masters to guard sites honoring the Elder Evils, these aberrations' limited intellects myopically focus on their instructions, devising and honing the most effective methods of protecting that which they were created to honor.

An Associate Editor of DRAGON *magazine, F. Wesley Schneider believes the shorter the author bio, the—.*

You would think that, as an Assistant Editor for DUNGEON*, it would be easy for James Lafond Sutter to write an author bio. You would be wrong.*

Mt.Zogon
GALEENA, HONEY? DON'T BE UPSET, BUT I HAVE NEVER HEARD MUSHROOM SPEAK.
NEVER?
YES. AND I DON'T THINK I WILL EVER HEAR HIM SPEAK.
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
TONY MOSELEY © 2007
I THINK YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING...
OH MY GOD!
DID YOU HEAR THAT, MUSHROOM? YOU'RE TELEPATHIC!
BY TONY MOSELEY
ZOGONIA.COM



Diplomacy

BY CHRISTOPHER WISSEL
BY UDON WITH TODD GAK, JIM ZUBKAVICH AND SHANE LAW
BY ROB LAZZARETTI

ANY SETTING | HIGH LEVEL (13TH–20TH) | PLANAR

They came from across the planes, fiends and celestials, heroes and cowards, seeking a prize richer than a hundred kingdoms. The battle rages not with swords and armor, but with cunning, intelligence, and sheer audacity. Here the best diplomats in the multiverse compete for the prize of the century: the Valley of Light. If the PCs are to win this coup for the forces of good, they must outplay these silver-tongued merchants at their own game.

"Diplomacy" is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure for 18th-level PCs. The majority of this event-based adventure takes place on a secluded demiplane. Words are at least as powerful as weapons and spells in this adventure, so having a character with good social skills is extremely helpful.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Janni have long dwelt in the deserts of the Material Plane, sampling the pleasures of the mortal realms. Despite their independence, they still defer to their ancient roots, maintaining strong ties to the Elemental Planes.

Utha Alzmed, the current Amir of the Hubul tribe (one of the largest and most prosperous jann settlements) took great strides to unite his people under a common banner. Unwavering in combat and a voice of justice in times of peace, Utha Alzmed is a model of prosperous leadership. Along with his domestic policies, the Amir has made bold alliances, improving his people's relations with the planes.

One of his most recent campaigns resulted in strengthened ties to the Elemental Plane of Earth. In the depths of the iron caverns, the Great Khan of the daos suffered an attack by a creature his subjects had unwittingly unburied, an undead aberration born of forgotten gods called an atropal. The Amir, heeding the daos' frantic call, rallied an army of janni heroes and managed to distract the destructive godling long enough for the daos to regroup and slay it. Many janni were slain in the fight, and those trapped in the earthen catacombs were lost.

The Great Khan, an upstart secondboy named Xanzel Xio, rewarded their sacrifices with a permanent alliance, and gave them free access to an untouched section of his realm called *Darrai Sei Rosani*, or the Valley of Light. This area is a wide swath of pure, unblemished diamond, pregnant with the wealth of a hundred mortal kingdoms.

Overwhelmed by this fortunate grant, Amir Alzmed determined to make the most of it. As his people could never use the mine due to their ties to the Material Plane, he shrewdly decided to barter it, looking to create new allies and gain a substantial payout to improve his holdings at home.

Using messengers of all stock and disposition, Amir Alzmed sent a year-long summons across the planes, seeking an offer worthy of *Darrai Sei Rosani*.

The response was overwhelming, enticing some of the most powerful

merchants, traders, diplomats, and power-hungry fiends in the multiverse. After long consideration, the Amir narrowed the field of diplomats down to six.

Calling in a favor from a race of neutral beings called the rilmani, the Amir set up the final debate in a small pleasure demiplane called the Demiplane of Gloaming. The neutral setting allows comfortable accommodations for each guest, and serves as a common ground for the final showdown.

The Amir himself oversees the proceedings, taking three days to formally consider the relative value offered by each of the esteemed diplomats. At the end, he will make his final, binding decision, narrowing the list of offers down to one. The winner offers his wealth to the janni, and receives the Valley of Light in return.

A leonal guardinal named Ivixel, proud warrior of Elysium, is among the esteemed six formally invited to the proceedings. He recently arrived on the Material Plane, desperately seeking heroes to represent the forces of good in a high-stakes game of deception, falsehood, and diplomacy.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The PCs are approached by a guardinal searching for diplomats. They learn of a bidding war to win a wealthy planar diamond mine, and that the gods of Elysium are in desperate need of its special properties. Ivixel, a leonal of that plane, has been chosen to enter the final debate on a neutral demiplane, but cannot win alone.

On the demiplane, the PCs encounter the jann arbiters, led by Amir Alzmed, and the other five representatives. They must contend with honor duels, formal debate, and the machinations of their opponents before finally protecting the mines from the grasp of two nefarious diplomats to win the deed for Elysium.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The adventure begins when the PCs are contacted by a being from the upper planes and asked to represent the forces of good on a diplomatic mission. While the circumstances of this proposal can take on many forms, the easiest way to introduce the adventure is for the creature to be a current ally of the party. Perhaps the PCs helped him before, or maybe they owe him a favor and he has come to collect on the debt.

If the PCs do not have such an ally, you can use Ivixel. Ivixel is a leonal from Elysium, specifically charged with maintaining the borders between the layers of his own plane. It is a proud duty, often calling him to battle against dark forces. Unfortunately, his post is also isolated from the more populous regions of the plane. As a result, Ivixel has a more common, rural way of relating to others. He is not unintelligent by any means, just uncomfortable relating to others in a sophisticated forum.

CHAPTER ONE: A THING OF VALUE

To meet the PCs, Ivixel chooses a remote, comfortable location, preferably good-aligned and far from prying eyes. If the PCs can cast *plane shift*, he sends a *silver raven figurine of wondrous power* and asks them to meet him on the Golden Beaches in Thalasia on the fourth layer of Elysium. If they cannot, or are unwilling to go to Elysium, he allows them to choose any remote location on a good-aligned plane or the Material Plane.

Ivixel does his best to make the PCs feel comfortable. He provides a sumptuous feast, and spends most of the meal asking questions regarding their exploits. After the meal, he explains his dilemma.

"For the most part, my homeland of Elysium is a paradise in every sense of the word, but one section has been sealed off from the rest. Within the confines of those blasted lands, hundreds of terrible monsters have been imprisoned for untold millennia. Once an age, guardinals like myself must fortify those boundaries to keep the rest of the upper planes safe.

"As you may already know, the janni have come into possession of a diamond mine on the Elemental Plane of Earth. The area, called the Valley of Light, is a vast underground complex filled with nothing but pure diamond. As they have no resources to mine it, they wish to barter it away. They will make their final decision during a three-day diplomatic summit held in a neutral realm called the Demiplane of Gloaming. While five other diplomats also offer a substantial reward for the mines, there can be only one winner. Elysium has charged me to win this prize, and use the diamonds to restore the borders in Elysium.

"Unfortunately, I believe I have little chance of winning the mines for the cause of good. Guardinals excel at many things, but diplomacy is not one of them. I need heroes who possess the strength, cunning, and finesse necessary to subvert our opponents and beat them at their own game.

"I have the necessary materials for you to make the trip, and I offer my personal seal to vouch for your presence at the proceedings. With your combined efforts, it might just be possible to beat the other diplomats, and win the Valley of Light for Elysium. Will you do it?"

Ivixel doesn't know any details about the other diplomats, as each finalist received the offer in secret.

If they agree, the Leonal gives them a *plane shift* scroll, a forked metal rod attuned to the Demiplane of Gloaming, and a stoppered clay pitcher called the *waters of Oceanus*. Ivixel explains that Elysium is offering the janni the pure water of the sacred river, distilled from its most potent tributaries. If the PCs win the mines, the guardinals have promised to install an oasis full of this water at seven different locations on the Material Plane, to be replenished as long as the janni wish to use them. The *waters of Oceanus* is but a small sample that the PCs can use during the debate.

As a reward for their assistance, the leonal offers each PC a magical item of their choice, worth up to 90,000 gp, to be awarded after the mines are won. Furthermore, they will be favored among the guardinals, and shall find shelter and sustenance in Elysium whenever they require it.

Ivixel wishes them luck, and tells them that they have seven days before the diplomats convene for the three-day meeting.

THE DEMIPLANE OF GLOAMING

Years ago, Amir Alzmed gained the trust of an extraplanar race of dispassionate philosophers called the rilmani, and has

been granted full mastery over the Demiplane of Gloaming that they created. The rimlani's only stipulation is that the Amir use the plane to judge impassively, and to resist the temptation to be swayed by his own morality.

The Amir has used the morphic features of the plane to create a conference hall designed to put the diplomats at ease. In most places, the floor and walls are made from smooth red sandstone, with no visible seams or joints. The doors are constructed of bone-white sandalwood, carved with fanciful depictions of desert landsapes. The temperature is warm, but a comfortable breeze flows pleasantly throughout.

The demiplane has the following traits:

- Normal gravity.
- Normal time.
- Patron morphic. Amir Alzmed has the ability to alter the physical features of the plane as he sees fit, as well as to use a standard action to create a persistent *wall of force* lasting up to 24 hours. In addition, the Amir possesses a spell-like ability to force any creature to accept a *plane shift* to another plane of their choosing as a standard action. As this is based on an unspoken agreement between patron and visitor, there is no save or spell resistance to avoid the effect. Any items in their possession that from the Plane of Gloaming do not leave with them—anything created by the plane turns to wisps of smoke if it leaves.
- Mildly neutral-aligned.

The elaborate dining hall is canopied with fine silks and cushioned furniture. The library and study has been graciously stocked to detail the culture and history of the janni, and decorated with fine art pieces from countless sentient civilizations. The back halls are reserved for janni only, comprised of personal quarters for Alzmed, his guards, and his servants.

A small oasis of water teeming with plants bearing dates, pomegranates, mangos, and other delicious fruits lies in the center of the diplomat's common area, which has been created to look like a desert evening, with warm sand underfoot and a starry sky overhead.

Each emissary, including the PCs, has been assigned one of the six private staterooms. Conscious of decorum, the Amir spent days reshaping each room's features to grant the greatest level of comfort for each of his guests.

THE ARRIVAL

When the PCs arrive on the Plane of Gloaming, read this description:

The sandstone walls of this massive oval meeting hall are fitted with several windows that reveal palm trees swaying under a twilight sky. The floor is clean-red stone covered with rich carpets. The walls are marked with potted desert flowers, silken curtains, and rich tapestries.

Three large tables are arranged to face a dais on the opposite side of the room. Behind the tables, a grandstand with several rows of seating allows spectators to observe the debate floor. Between the grandstands, a large door appears to be the room's only entrance.

Amir Utha Alzmed (LN male jann monk 17), flanked by his personal guards (LN jann fighter 12) and several servants, greets the PCs immediately upon their arrival. As the servants attend to their needs, Alzmed states that he hopes that the proceedings will be conducted with grace and fairness. He gives them a silver key and directs them to their quarters. All six diplomatic entourages are to attend the welcome dinner, to hear the rules of engagement, socialize, and be entertained by the Amir's performers.

IVIXEL'S QUARTERS

These staterooms are decorated with the simple tastes of Elysium. Clean, fresh air and natural light are shed through numerous openings and small vents in the ceiling. The sitting room contains flowering plants and colorful tapestries depicting various scenes of simple pastoral beauty. Trays of fruit and other assorted pastries wait in every corner, and two full casks of expensive elven wine sit next to silver serving dishes and cups. There is enough comfortable furniture to accommodate up to a dozen human-sized guests.

WATERS OF OCEANUS

This clay jug of crystal-clear water glows with a faint blue light, distilled from the water of Oceanus, a river that flows through many of the Upper Planes. The water has many healing and nourishing properties. A single dose of this water can nourish a Medium creature for an entire day, and when the water is consumed, the imbiber also receives the benefits of a *restoration* spell.

A full 15 ounce jug of this liquid contains 15 doses.

Moderate conjuration; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, *create water*, *restoration*; Price 10,000 gp.

A 2-inch-thick mithral door with a superior lock (DC 40) separates the private quarters from the delegates' common chamber. The door can be opened from either side with the silver key.

Mithral Door: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 40; Open Lock DC 40.

The PCs may want to make a number of other preparations to keep their possessions and privacy safe, such as setting magical traps, wards, protections against divination, and various other details. They have several hours to set these plans in motion before the first event.

During the adventure, two of the rival diplomats (Piramus and Sharlocke, see Appendix) individually attempt to spy on the PCs and their chambers. Piramus attempts *greater scrying* on their quarters at least once a day. He also uses *true seeing* and *arcane sight* scrolls to observe the PCs, if he can get away with it. Sharlocke sends out several *prying eyes* to patrol the demiplane, ordered to slip into small openings and enter rooms whenever a door is left open. He also uses *sending* to contact Gehenna and request reports from several of his fellow arcanaloths who have been put to work casting *commune*, *vision*, and similar divination spells.

Unless the PCs take precautions, Piramus has solid information on their active spells, alignments, protections, and magic items. Sharlocke, if uncontested, learns intimate details regarding their past adventures, including any indiscre-

tions such as murder, theft, and betrayal. He also gains a rundown of their past enemies, and a summary of all their current allegiances.

ORDER OF EVENTS

Over the next three days, the six diplomats have opportunities to present their cases before the Amir. The first night is meant for relaxation, as the diplomats are treated to janni hospitality, entertained, and made to feel welcome.

On the second day, lots are drawn and each diplomat is paired up with an adversary, competing against each other in formal debate. Three lose, and three move on. The three winners are required to spend the second evening entertaining janni servants and staff, as is customary among their guests.

Finally, on the third day, the three finalists present their closing arguments and must answer any objections raised by the other two. The Amir hears each case and makes his final decision. Once a winner is declared, he signs the formal contract and receives the deed to the Valley of Light in exchange for what was promised in the winner's closing argument.

THE COMPETITION

In addition to the PCs, five other diplomats wish to gain the rights to the Valley of Light. Most have arrived with entourages, and prior to the welcome dinner they spend their time changing clothing, requesting minor environmental changes to their rooms, and adding wards to their quarters.

Each diplomat is listed below, along with a brief description that highlights their offer and diplomatic tactics. Complete stat blocks for Sharlocke, Piramus, Arcturian, and Zin, including battle tactics, are located in the appendix.

SHARLOCKE

NE male arcanaloth sorcerer 2/archmage 3

Appearance: Sharlocke has a human body, a canine head, and two black-nailed hands which he scrapes against tabletops when lost in thought. He speaks in a clearly audible whisper, and the corners of his mouth often work themselves into a faint, predatory smile.

Offer: Sharlocke offers the janni unlimited access to his libraries on Gehenna. He has also leaked the existence of the Valley of Light to both demons and devils, threatening to bring about the destruction of the entire jann tribe.

Goals: Sharlocke works on behalf of his immediate superior, Shemeska the Marauder, who desires the mines to fuel her research into the location of an artifact called the *Staff of the Lower Planes*, an item of epic power once belonging to a deposed yugoloth ruler known as Anthraxus.

Tactics: Sharlocke projects an aura of calm confidence. He relies on intimidation to cow his opponents, constantly punctuating his points with the use of fire-based *prestidigitation* effects. He spends most of his free time in research, hoping to gain an extra edge against his diplomatic enemies. He is also required to keep Shemeska up to date on his efforts, and sends regular reports to Sigil.

Allies: The arcanaloth comes to the meeting alone, save for a few nessian warhound guard dogs.

PIRAMUS ARISTEDES

CN male mercane bard 9/spymaster 7

Appearance: Piramus is a mercane, one of a race of blue-skinned, 12-foot-tall planar merchants. He usually wears several voluminous layers of robes with unaccustomed grace. Several masterwork items dangle like jewels from his person, including snuff boxes, spectacles, pocket watches, and other mundane fetishes. His multi-jointed hands, long neck, and royal garb are bejeweled with multiple rings, bracelets, necklaces, and brooches. His expression is impassive and unreadable.

Offer: Piramus offers the deeds to five entire planets on the Material Plane, full of natural resources and completely uninhabited by other civilizations, along with the magic necessary to travel to them.

Goals: Piramus is quite unlike any other mercane. Nearly a hundred years ago, he came across a powerful artifact called the *gem of entropic perspective*. The chaotic relic altered his mentality completely. Instead of upholding the lawful reputation of his race, he is now a creature of pure deceit. With an endless supply of diamonds in hand, he plans on creating countless duplicates of his artifact and distributing them across the planes in an orgy of chaotic dementia.

Tactics: To mask his chaotic nature, Piramus spent decades perfecting his cover identity, which is nearly identical to the one he had before his chaotic artifact changed him. The mercane projects nothing but grace and goodwill at all times. He maintains a demeanor of impassive gravity, and uses his oratory abilities to stern perfection. Not even his own kin are aware of his altered mental state. Sometimes, Piramus allows his true nature to surface for a short time, expressing joy, humor, sadness, or rage, but only benefit his cause, never giving himself away. Before any debate, he casts *glibness*.

Allies: Piramus travels with two loyal athach guards, dressing them in rare skins and sometimes using *invisibility* to mask their primitive appearance if he feels it could hurt his social standing.

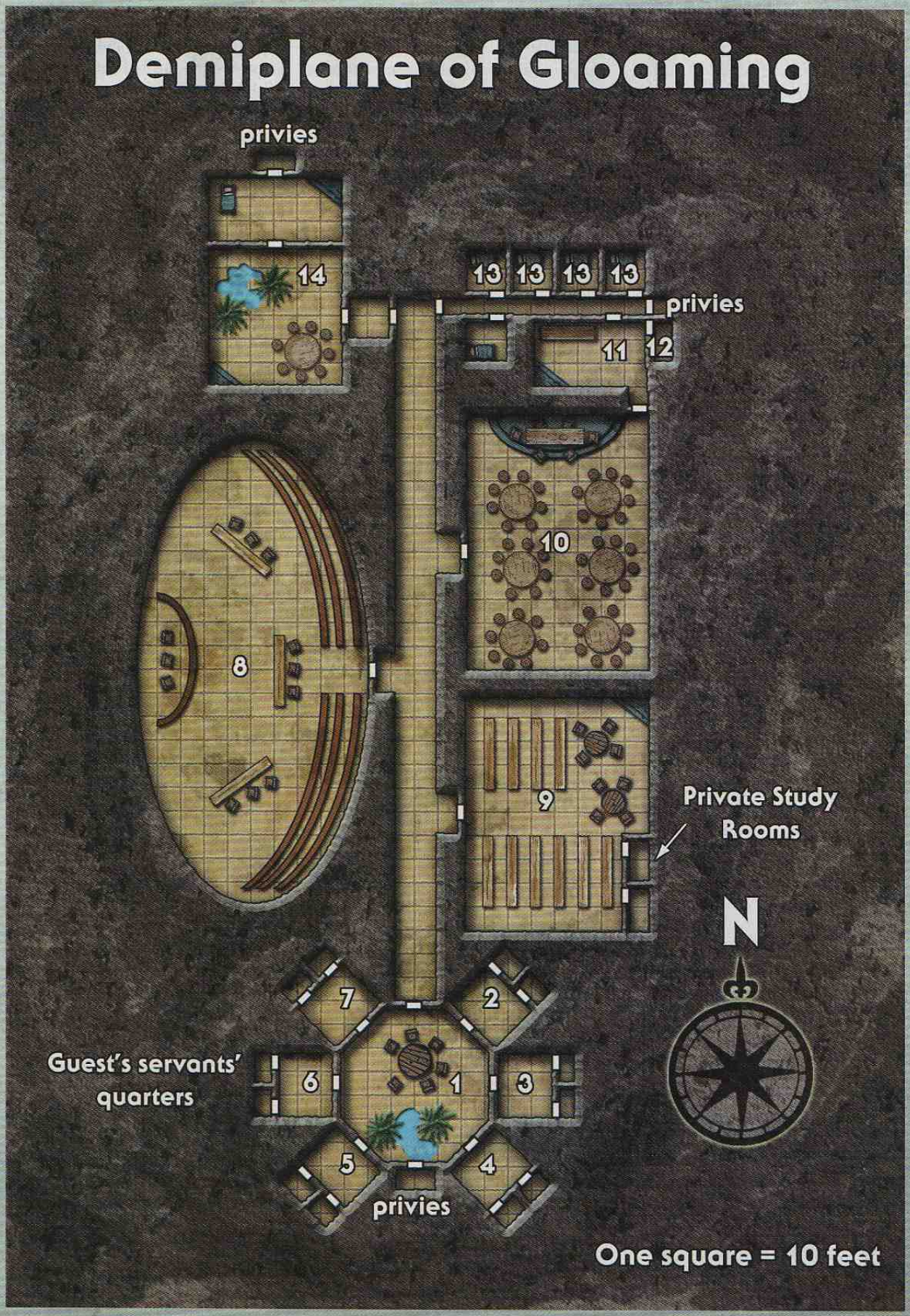
COMMODORE ARCTURIAN MARSK

N male human swashbuckler 20

Appearance: When not in combat, Arcturian dresses in masterwork ceremonial garb. He wears a heavy suit of dazzling mithral full plate, highlighted with gold filigree. A huge, ironwood composite

DEMIPLANE OF GLOAMING MAP KEY

1. Diplomats' Common Area
2. Ivixel's Chambers (PCs' chambers)
3. Sharlocke's Chambers
4. Piramus's Chambers
5. Arcturian's Chambers
6. Zin's Chambers
7. Claudliplude's Chambers
8. Conference Chamber and Arena
9. Library
10. Dining Hall
11. Kitchen
12. Pantry
13. Servants' Quarters
14. The Amir's Personal Chambers


Demiplane of Gloaming
privies
14
13 13 13 13
privies
11
12
10
8
9
Private Study Rooms
N
7
2
Guest's servants' quarters
6
1
3
5
4
privies
One square = 10 feet

longbow and a jeweled greatsword project over his shoulders, and he carries a halberd bearing the standards of his numerous holdings. These items radiate strong to overwhelming transmutation, while his actual magic items radiate nothing, due to several *Nystul's magical aura* spells. He has long, wavy blond hair swept back in a casual ponytail, and his rugged face bears many nicks and scrapes. He is missing two fingers on his left hand.

Offer: Arcturian offers free access to his military schools, as well as a cache of beautifully jeweled scimitars, falchions, and ranged weapons, constructed from the wealth of the diamond mines.

Goals: Arcturian Marsk is an adventurer of great renown in his own lands. He owns a fleet of merchant vessels, commands a standing naval fleet, and has the ear of several kingdoms. While most of this bores him beyond tears, he has found time to create new standards of excellence in lightly armored combat, a staple of his navy. He has founded several schools devoted to light weaponry, and has perfected its use in waterborne martial campaigns. He desires nothing more than to use the diamond's nearly indestructible properties to create more experimental weapons and armor.

Tactics: On his home plane, Arcturian Marsk uses his reputation as a fighter and naval commander to execute his wishes. Without that to fall back on, he is somewhat out of his element. He knows he has a good offer on the table for the martial-minded janni, and needs to display his fighting prowess. To this end, he keeps a heavy chip on his shoulder, and reacts to the smallest slights with fits of overblown piqué.

Allies: Marsk comes with an entourage of proud bralani warriors called the Seven Sisters, loyal allies gained during Arcturian's ocean-going campaigns. To prevent breaches in decorum, he has ordered them to remain in his quarters. They comply, but the sounds of drunken laughter, breaking glass, and fighting can often be heard through his door.

ZIN OMEGA, MOUTHPIECE OF PRIMUS

LN male tertian modron

Appearance: Zin is a tertian modron, a humanoid creature that looks as if he's made of stone. Bald, his brow juts out to either side of his head in hornlike protrusions. His muscular body is dark, almost as if carved from onyx, and his feet are more like those of an elephant than a human. His tail is long and prehensile, and is tipped with a ball of smooth stone. Zin rarely speaks unless spoken to, and spends his free time silent and unmoving.

Offer: Primus offers access to accurate maps of the labyrinthine portal, a vast network of interconnected, ever-changing planar gateways that leads to all planes.

Goals: Zin's goals are simple. He wishes to deliver the argument of Primus and return to his normal duties. Diamonds are the most expensive component to modron creation and maintenance. With the Valley of Light in sight, Primus can extrapolate the possibilities of a new planar order, where every sentient race has a lawful counterpart, enforcing order and clockwork efficiency to further the harmony of Mechanus.

Tactics: Zin prefers not to speak unless it's relevant to his argument, and shows no interest in the other diplomats. When forced to converse, he uses perfect logic to dissect his foes and expose their motivations. Zin assumes that Primus is infallible, and is supremely confident that he will win based on the reasoning of the argument.

Allies: None.

CLAUDLIPLUDE XII, KING OF THE XORNS

N male advanced xorn

Appearance: The elder xorn is a massive creature, with hundreds of sparkling metal chips imbedded into the folds of his hide. He speaks in a deep, gravelly voice, with the tone of a regent. He waddles on three stubby legs and clumsily bumps into items and people while walking. His three stone-lidded eyes are always moving and refocusing, taking in details, and the gaping mouth at the top of his head is always smacking and chewing on some precious morsel.

Offer: Claudliplude vows to share a percentage of all diamonds mines from the Valley of Light with the janni, as well as offering the gratitude of the xorns.

Goals: Claudliplude gained his great position the way all other xorns have, through providing food for

Claudliplude XII

his kin. Despite his bulk, the xorn is a tremendously observant creature, perhaps one of the best the race has ever produced. He can sniff out gem deposits on an almost preternatural level. Always on the lookout for more ways to expand his kingdom, Claudliplude hungers for the delicacies that only a pure field of diamonds can offer. Gaining the mines would strengthen his position as a provider and thwart his enemies at home.

Tactics: Claudliplude has few tactics, seeing the proceedings as a three-day party in his honor. He has little finesse, and almost no understanding of the jann mindset. His main strength is in his ability to use his senses, which are honed to razor perfection. While he doesn't really have the insight or the intelligence to act on what he perceives, he understands the value his observations might have for others.

Allies: Claudliplude travels with three elder xorns. Each of them vies for Claudliplude's attentions by bribing him with precious gems. They offer conflicting advice and poor council.

CHAPTER TWO: MACHINATIONS

This adventure is set up as a series of events. Not all of these events need to occur, and they do not have to occur in the order that they are presented. As long as the basic three-day structure is observed, anything can happen.

If the PCs make bad decisions, or use their abilities poorly, they can lose the debate, offend their hosts, or even be banished for unnecessary acts of belligerence. Don't be afraid to let the PCs fail. Losing the debate is not lethal, and may actually create circumstances that contribute to the flow of your campaign.

EVENT ONE: THE WELCOME DINNER

The three-day event kicks off with a lavish feast, with all the guests served several courses unique to their tastes and constitutions. The Amir welcomes his guests and explains the flow of the debate. There are no specific rules of decorum, so it is up to each guest to determine their own conduct during the proceedings.

The other diplomats are initially indifferent to the PCs. Sharlocke remains thoughtful and observant, asking polite questions when appropriate but volunteering nothing. Piramus plays the smooth talker, discussing the finer points of trade and vocally admiring the janni's hospitality. Marsk is somewhat stiff and rude, attempting to eat in heavy armor and spilling his wine. Claudliplude overshadows everybody with his size and poor table manners, overwhelmingly loud as he crunches the collection of precious gems on his plate. The xorn also boisterously leads the conversation when he can, hinting that he has some "pretty rocky" connections with an utter lack of subtlety. Zin eats nothing, says nothing, and responds to direct questions with monosyllabic answers.

At some point during the second course, Sharlocke offers a polite point of order to the Amir, gesturing toward the PCs. He says, "The leonal Ivixel is not in attendance, and seems to be replaced by a number of adventures, armed to the teeth. Is it not possible that they've killed the poor guardinal? I know that the invitations were given in secret, but there are many ways to learn these things. After all, I knew about Ivixel."

The PCs suddenly become the center of attention. Piramus tries to hurt Sharlocke by being the only one to defend the PCs' presence. Finally, the Amir decides that the arcanaloth has a point.

The PCs must convince the diplomats that they are legitimate, a feat requiring a Diplomacy check. Sharlocke should cross-examine them harshly during the roleplaying. Award a +0 to +15 circumstance bonus on their Diplomacy check, depending on how well they justify themselves. Claudliplude can be swayed with a DC 30 check. Marsk is negatively disposed, but can still be convinced if the PCs beat DC 50. Sharlocke does not budge his position for any check, and Zin offers no input at all.

The Amir makes his decision based on the majority opinions of the other five diplomats. If they convince both Claudliplude and Marsk, then the matter is settled (Piramus is already on their side). If they've convinced no one, the Amir politely asks the PCs to leave, ending the adventure. If they are tied two to two, the inevitable Zin becomes the tiebreaker. It reluctantly states:

"Taking sides on such a matter is irrelevant, as it will be the strength of the argument that determines possession of the mines. If the question at hand is about their right to argue a case, then it is clear that those who ask such questions are motivated by fear. I have confidence in my arguments, and therefore, I cannot care. If the question is in regard to the circumstances of their representation, it is also irrelevant. If they successfully win the mines, then it simply means that their argument was better, and their bypass of the first round of presentations was obviously justified. As my argument will be superior, the point is moot.

"If you are questioning whether or not these people accurately represent the beliefs of Elysium, I do not see the relevance. However, that question of representation is easy enough to determine. Sharlocke, arcanaloth of Gehenna, attempt to *detect good*. If you are successful, then you have my answer."

At this, Piramus roars with laughter, and the Amir nods to Zin with great respect. Sharlocke withdraws his complaint with a scowl.

EVENT TWO: DRAWING NAMES

The following morning, the Amir announces that he has randomly determined the order of debates for the day, to

DIVINATION

You should allow the PCs to use whatever divination spells they like. While such abilities are helpful in determining their next move, these spells are not a good way to expose information to the Amir. None of the janni in attendance have access to divinations of their own, so any accusations become one party's word against another. It is considered rude to accuse someone of lying without non-magical, concrete proof. As shrewd traders in their own right, janni understand that while outright lying is bad form, exaggeration is a necessary part of the diplomatic arts.

begin after lunch and conclude prior to dinner. Sharlocke debates Claudliplude first, then the PCs debate Zin, and finally Piramus debates Marsk. Feel free to draw out the announcement for tension.

Directly after the announcement, the diplomats fly into a flurry of action. During the morning hours, the PCs may initiate their own meetings and machinations. In addition, they are approached by the following individuals:

- Claudliplude takes aside the PCs and offers a one-pound, flawlessly cut ruby worth 25,000 gp if they can arrange a meeting with Sharlocke to gain insight into his tactics, or turn up some useful information about the arcanaloth. If the PCs meet with Sharlocke, they can make a DC 25 Spot to notice that the *bag of holding* around his waist is bloodstained. If they are sly, they might be able to see what is inside of it through Sleight of Hand, trickery, or divination. Alternately, the PCs can visit the library, and use a DC 20 Search check to notice that the arcanaloth has spent the night specifically researching every documented jann holding and oasis on the Material Plane. Either of these two facts earns the gem from Claudliplude.
- Sharlocke desires a meeting with the PCs as well. He plans on intimidating the Amir, but he has no emotional edge against the modron's superior logic. He needs the PCs to win the first round, so he can beat them later. If they listen to his advice, he tells them that the modron will use pure logic to defeat them. "Frankly, giving the mines to Mechanus probably makes the most sense, and Primus already has the Amir on his side. The Amir claims impartiality, but he is still subject to emotional bias. Try to see things from the janni's emotional perspective, and don't let Zin claim moral high ground over Elysium."
- Piramus meets with the PCs to buy and sell magic items. As a mercane, he can use *sending* to order items, and *plane shift* back and forth to the mercane city of Union to pick them up. He does not wish to discuss the debate, only offering a hope that he can beat the honorable Marsk.
- Marsk drops a gauntlet at the feet of the PCs. He demands a duel under the laws of his kingdom, and immediately appeals to the Amir for justice. Secretly, he knows that he is no match for the rest of the diplomats, and figures that a duel can only help him. As no one is actually afraid of Marsk's diplomacy skills, the other diplomats are uniformly inclined to back him against the PCs, regardless of appeals and Diplomacy checks. Marsk's justification for the duel can be based on any previous interaction, such as an insult (real or implied) at his conduct over dinner the previous evening, a perceived "racial enemy" among the PCs, or a vocal belief that the PCs are imposters that do not serve Elysium. If none of those options are available, he makes something up.
- Zin offers nothing, but if the PCs approach him he states, "Your desire to coddle me with small talk is a sign of your insecurity and is irrelevant to the proceedings."

EVENT THREE: CLAUDLIPLUDE VS. SHARLOCKE

During all three debates, the diplomats are positioned at tables on opposite sides of the room, while the Amir and his guards position themselves on the raised dais. Onlookers (such as the janni or the PCs) are allowed to watch the debates from the grandstand. Each diplomat is allowed to speak in turn, and can offer witnesses, evidence, props, or anything else they can think of. Counterarguments can also be offered, as long as they don't come to violence. Try not to drag on the proceedings in this first debate, as the PCs are merely spectators. Just give them enough to understand how it works.

Claudliplude offers nothing specific to the janni, but mentions that he would spread the wealth of the mines to all involved. He then takes ten minutes to discuss his relatives, and his numerous connections with the daos.

Sharlocke makes his offer smoothly, proposing access to the knowledge of the lower planes. He then states that he has made several other fiends aware of the mines, namely a pit fiend general named Agnzari and a balor demon lord named Taruleil. Both have broken off from the blood war, and each are making their way toward jann holdings on Material Plane to take prisoners for interrogation. Agnzari has already sent him a present, and he dumps out a bag of janni heads. "Giving the mines to Gehenna is the only way to avert the attentions of these despicable creatures."

Because of this new threat, Claudliplude loses the debate. If the PCs provide him with either piece of information in Event Three, the xorn can prepare for Sharloke's tactic and undermine his argument. It doesn't help him, but it weakens the arcanaloth's final argument in Event Eight.

EVENT FOUR: THE DUEL (EL 20)

Unless the PCs find a way to avoid the challenge, the Amir decrees that a formal duel will take place between the first and second debates. This gives both parties a chance to avoid bias prior to having to present their case. The Amir calls the PCs and Arcturian forward, and takes time to hear grievances from both sides.

He decrees that the debate floor shall be altered for the duel, but it will be up to both parties to determine fair conditions. The Amir presents each of five separate combat variables, with both sides taking turns to present their desires. If all parties agree upon a specific variable, then it is settled without conflict and the Amir moves on to the next one. If the parties disagree, then they must roll opposed Diplomacy checks to determine who wins. The Amir strives for fair play, so each time a side wins a particular issue, the loser is granted a +10 cumulative circumstance bonus to their next check.

To complicate matters, either party can attempt to trick the other. During the argument for a contested variable, either side may roll a Bluff check against their opponent's Sense Motive. If they succeed, they can pretend to argue vehemently, and then effectively take a "1" on their opposed Diplomacy roll. If this ploy fails, it backfires, and the bluffer receives a –10

penalty on their next Diplomacy check, instead of the +10 circumstance bonus.

Once all five variables are settled, the Amir transforms the plane to reflect the desires of the duelists. During this ten-minute period, Arcturian slowly removes all of his ceremonial armor and reequips himself with his authentic magic items, as the rules of the duel allow. He has non-magical counterparts for all of his weapons and armor. When the battle area is complete, both parties take their positions and roll initiative at the Amir's signal.

Below are the variables under debate. All page references refer to the appropriate sections of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The Amir presents them in the following order, unless the PCs insist on a random sequence:

- **Elemental Variables:** The Amir can alter the terrain according to air, earth, water, and fire. The environment can have high winds (severe winds, page 95), lava (lava effects, page 304), acid pools (acid effects, page 302), ice (ice effects, page 302), or smooth, unbroken ground. Arcturian prefers high winds to discourage ranged attacks, but tries to take a "1" on the roll if the PCs show a strong preference.
- **Moral Variables:** Should the terrain be stable (law), or should it have some random parts or effects (chaos)? Also, should the duel be to the death (evil), or should it allow a merciful surrender (good)? If the duelists choose random effects, choose 1-2 appropriate effects from the "Interesting Combats" section on page 17. Arcturian prefers chaotic environments and a surrender option, but does not press hard.
- **Use of Magic:** Should spellcasting and magical items be allowed? The Amir allows the duelists to choose no magic items and no spells, magic items and no spells, or all magic. Arcturian pulls out all the stops to argue for no spells.
- **Martial Variables:** Should the combatants be allowed to use all weapons and armor? The Amir allows the duelists to choose between martial weapons with no armor, martial and ranged weapons with no armor, full use of armor with only martial weapons, or all martial, ranged, and armor. Marsk strongly argues for full armor and martial weapons only, using Bluff to take "1" if contested, hoping to trick the PC's into thinking he's dependent on it.
- **Combatants:** How many will be allowed to duel? One-on-one, or team based? Arcturian argues for one-on-one, but doesn't really press unless he's lost the spellcasting argument. If the duel is to be team based, he calls upon his bralani allies.

When the duel begins, each side starts at opposites ends of the battle circle (which encompasses most of the conference room's area). The presence of lava or acid requires rope bridges, protruding rocks, and other rough surfaces, no two more than 15 feet apart. Flight is only restricted by the ceiling and the edges of the battle circle. If any restricted tactics, weapons, or spellcasting are used, the cheating side loses in the eyes of the Amir.

Arcturian Marsk: hp 153; see Appendix.

Development: If Arcturian loses the contest (death or surrender if brought under 20 hp), he considers himself disgraced, and withdraws from the proceedings in embarrassment. If he wins, the PCs are disgraced, but they can still compete and win their debates.

EVENT FIVE: DEFYING PRIMUS

The second debate features the PCs going head-to-head with the will of the enigmatic, god-like paragon of absolute law, Primus. His representative in the debate, the tertian modron Zin, presents a sound and reasoned series of arguments prepared in advance by the master of logical thought, and effectively takes 10 on his Diplomacy checks. In addition to his standard bonuses, he gets circumstance bonuses based on the quality of each argument.

Zin presents one fifth of his statement at a time, then pauses to allow a chance for the PCs to respond or try to counter. In order to win the debate, the PCs must win three out of their five Diplomacy rolls against the DCs given at the start of each section.

Each section of the inevitable's argument is followed by two sample phrases, one emotional and one logical. If the PCs incorporate the gist of either or both of those phrases in their counters,

they gain a healthy circumstance bonus before making their check. You should also award other bonuses based on role-playing and creative interaction.

Section One, +10 circumstance bonus, effective DC 61

"My opponent offers something of great value, the waters of Oceanus. However, despite the beneficial properties of that substance, the water is not the only source of its particular benefits. Any divine entity may grant healing properties, which suggests that Elysium offers nothing more than the benefits of a simple cleric. The presence of any high-ranking janni of faith can easily outstrip all of the water's benefits, and with greater frequency. The janni may worship any number of deities, such as those that reside on Mechanus, and receive the blessings of the gods without the need to sacrifice such immense wealth."

+15 emotional bonus: "The janni have a right to receive benefits for their property, and those benefits should not require bowing to a God of Law."

+15 logical bonus: "Worship of any deity requires a lifetime of service, and Elysium offers these benefits without any such sacrifice."

Section Two, +10 circumstance bonus, effective DC 61

"Mechanus contains the discipline necessary to maintain the clockwork efficiency of existence. Elysium, while good, is a pleasure plane of leisure and reward. It is a place where heroes go to rest, not continue toiling. Mechanus is a plane where the faithful are rewarded with discipline and hard work for eternity. As a result, Mechanus will use the mine to one hundred percent efficiency, and obtain a positive benefit in the shortest possible amount of time. Instead of waste and laziness, the entire universe shall feel the effects of wealth put to perfect use."

+15 emotional bonus: "There are many among the janni who are both good and hardworking. It is not a contradiction."

+15 logical bonus: "Efficient use of resources only creates a benefit for those that own them. It is a zero sum game for anyone without a personal stake."

Section Three, +0 circumstance bonus, effective DC 51

"Mechanus will not be using the diamonds for purposes of self-preservation, greed, or maintaining beauty. They will be used to specifically maintain the very integrity of the planes. It may be an extension of lawful philosophy, but it is one that affects every creature in the multiverse. To deny Mechanus the mines is to increase the possibility that the clockwork of the universe will fail."

+15 emotional bonus: "Every sentient being is free to protect themselves. It is not the responsibility of Mechanus."

+15 logical bonus: "Mechanus works for its own self-interest, namely the promotion of its specific philosophy. Every plane on the great wheel works toward that same goal."

Section Four, +0 circumstance bonus, effective DC 51

"The leadership of the janni has taken great steps to secure holdings and allies on the planes. Mechanus offers exclusive use of the labyrinthine portal. Only those with a direct link to Primus can enjoy such interplanar travel. This gift of mobility will have a direct benefit to the goals of the janni people."

+15 emotional bonus: "While the janni seek allies on the planes, they are still native outsiders. Also, the current leadership, in the Amir, seeks this fellowship. Future generations may not."

+15 logical bonus: "The janni's goal is to be happy on the Material Plane. Elysium provides a direct benefit towards that goal, while Mechanus only provides a roundabout tool with no guaranteed benefits."

Section Five, +20 circumstance bonus, effective DC 71

"Mechanus is of absolute law. Above all other creatures, the will of Mechanus must be conceded as an honest entity. Primus is the master of upholding law, overseeing transaction, and sealing bargains with the justice. The mine contract you hold in your possession was sanctified, not with good, but with the only power capable of enforcing justice: absolute law. When it comes time to make good on what was bartered, who else among these diplomats can absolutely guarantee full payment? While others on this debate floor quibble and deflect, it is Mechanus that stands for truth."

Zin Omega

+15 emotional bonus: "The veiled accusation is infuriating, and we submit that fairness is a virtue of goodness, not law."

+15 logical bonus: "The goal of these proceedings is for the janni to consider the relative value of our offers. The matter of upholding payment of such offers is simply not relevant to the debate."

Development: If the PCs win the debate, Zin takes just enough time to say, "Primus will not be pleased," before using *plane shift* to leave. If Zin wins, the PCs cannot advance, but they are allowed to stay if they wish. If they stay, feel free to run the rest of the adventure. Although the PCs can no longer win the mines for Elysium, they can still gain new contacts and forge alliances that span the outer planes.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs win the debate with Zin, give them a CR 19 experience award.

EVENT SIX: THE MERCANE'S OFFER

Depending on the outcome of the duel, there is a very good chance that the Mercane will not have to debate Arcturian. If this is the case, the Amir allows him to make his offer uncontested, automatically moving on to the final round against Sharlocke and the PCs. Sharlocke protests this heavily (as may the PCs), but the Amir sees no justifiable alterative. Putting Piramus against an earlier victor would only undermine him, and give the opponent a second chance to reiterate his arguments.

Piramus takes the podium gracefully, and uses scrolls to cast a series of *hallucinatory terrain* spells. Each one shows lush landscapes untouched by civilization. Piramus states that each set of images is one of five separate planets in the infinite expanse of the Material Plane, lush with resources and untouched by civilized hands. He claims to have purchased the planets over the years, mostly from a variety of primitive cultures wishing to move their civilizations to the Concordant Domain of the Outlands, the Plane of Shadow, or a more heavily populated area of the Material Plane. Now vacant, they wait for a civilization to take them over and populate them. The contracts for this transaction lie ready to be signed as soon as the Amir hands over the Valley of Light to the mercane.

While the offer of five separate planets is far richer than anyone else's, it is obviously too good to be true. Piramus is lying, and the images he shows have been modeled from heavily populated areas of the PCs' home world, altered to remove the cities, farmlands, and other signs of civilized life.

If the PCs are watching the presentation, they can study the images and make a DC 25 Spot check. If successful, they notice several significant details that they recognize from their previous adventures. The details should be based around your ongoing campaign. Some examples would be a mountain with white smoke rising from its core, a deep, miles-wide canyon, a secluded jungle island, or a particular stretch of coastline.

Seeing these familiar images allows the PCs to suspect that something is amiss. The effects of this are covered in Event Eight.

If Arcturian and Piramus do debate, the mercane toys with the swashbuckler efficiently and ruthlessly. Halfway through the proceedings, Arcturian becomes so flustered that he storms off to his rooms, effectively quitting.

EVENT SEVEN: AN EVENING OF ENTERTAINMENT

By the end of dinner, only the Amir and three finalists remain. Once the servants have cleared, the Amir calls for entertainment. Every jann on the plane convenes in the dining area to be entertained by each of the finalists in turn.

The arcanaloth offers to go first, and uses his spells to summon bone devils, babaus, and other fiendish monsters to display gruesome acts of disemboweling. Sharlocke punctuates the drama with *fireballs*, pointing out eviscerated bits of anatomy and fiendish effects, until the entire affair culminates in a horrid display of violence and hate. This does not win him any points with the Amir, but it helps underscore his Intimidation rolls and gives everyone present a sample of the horrors that await them if the arcanaloth fails to win.

Piramus goes next, and uses his Perform (oratory) to weave tales of humor, heroism, and sorrow. For extra effect, he throws in his *fascinate* ability, getting many of the servants to openly weep or guffaw until they beg for mercy. If Piramus has a Perform check greater than 40, the Amir is so impressed, he lets slip a comment that the Valley of Light will be in good hands.

The PCs go last, and must devise some form of entertainment. If they use Perform, they can try to upstage Piramus with a higher roll, a success that can have a positive effect during Event Eight.

In addition to performing, the PCs can finally get some downtime while both Piramus and Sharlocke are occupied with their performances. If they want to slip away for some espionage, this would be a good time to do so. The personal quarters of their two opponents are outlined below. The use of any incriminating evidence is handled in Event Eight.

If the PCs are ever caught going through a diplomat's room without permission, the Amir regards them as thieves. From that moment on, they receive a –10 penalty on all future Diplomacy rolls during the adventure.

PIRAMUS'S QUARTERS (EL VARIES)

All the furniture in these dim, opulent quarters has been constructed to accommodate a large creature. The decoration is ostentatiously wealthy, full of dark russet and purple. Gold busts of monarchs and artists stare blankly from every wall, and rich tapestries depict scenes of deities in conflict. The air is thick with the cloying aroma of incense and vases filled with deep red roses.

The door to Piramus's chambers is locked with a supreme lock and an *arcane lock* spell.

Mithral Door: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 40; Open Lock DC 40 once *arcane lock* is bypassed.

Creatures: Two hulking athatch guards watch the entrance at all times. They are not very intelligent, but are willing to risk their lives for the mercane. While they try to prevent obvious attempts to break in and steal, they can be fooled with disguises, spells, or a clever ruse.

Athatchs (2): hp 135 each; *Monster Manual* 21.

Traps: A *glyph of warding* waits on the floor directly behind the door, which activates unless the password "invincible" is uttered. If it is activated, the blast can be heard in the dining room, causing two elite guards and Piramus to arrive in 1d4+1 rounds.

Glyph of Warding (Blast): CR 6; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding [blast]*, 16th-level cleric, 8d8 sonic, DC 14 Reflex save, half damage); multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

Treasure: Piramus has created a decoy treasure to fool potential thieves. Three iron chests protected by superior locks are marked with specific planar locations. The first is filled with 3,500 gp in gems, and is addressed to merchants in Union. The second contains 10,000 sp, and is addressed to any familiar kingdom in your campaign. The final chest is addressed to Acheron, to a pair of fiends named Apate and Dolos. It contains a *wand of identify* (15 charges) and several cursed magical items: *boots of dancing, bracers of defenselessness, gauntlets of fumbling, 5 potions of poison,* and a *robe of vermin.* To make the items more enticing, he has also forged a to-do list, which includes a list of figures, and a reminder to *teleport* these items in the morning.

In addition to the chests, the ivory scroll case on the mercane's desk contains a copy of each of the "deeds" to the mercane's false holdings. Each scroll has a meaningless name and address scrawled on it, so if the parchments are unrolled, the address is on the backside. Each parchment's front side contains an *illusory script.* If dispelled, the hidden text reveals cryptic messages, such as "The fox has entered the chicken coop," or "Broken blades cannot stab a ghost." They mean nothing, but are meant to distract readers from the backside of each parchment, containing the upside-down address. This address is the effect of a *secret page* spell, used to disguise the scroll's complex forgeries as simple, poorly scrawled addresses. If the PCs can penetrate the *secret page* spells and gain access to the real (false) three-dimensional addresses of the supposed worlds, they can easily use *divinations* to determine that the planets the mercane is offering do not, in fact, exist.

Treasure Chests (3): Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 40.

Sharlocke

SHARLOCKE'S QUARTERS (EL VARIES)

These quarters consist of a single cavernous room smelling of sulfur and burned flesh. The air is stifling and filled with heavy smoke, rising from a pockmarked stone floor bright with the glow of several bubbling lava pits.

The room is decorated with several art objects, mostly made of the bones of misshapen creatures. A large desk sits in one corner, loaded with terrifying versions of mundane objects: scales made from finger bones, a spyglass constructed of petrified remains, a glass water clock that drips bubbling green fluid, and a set of blueprints to several levels of a terrifying fortress called the Tower of Incarnate Pain. A bookshelf made of polished obsidian lines the back wall, loaded with thick, iron-bound tomes.

Sharlocke has asked the Amir to have his door completely sealed from both sides. To come to and from the room, Sharlocke casts *invisibility,* uses *shapechange* to transform into a Fine creature, and travels through the keyhole.

Sealed Mithral Door: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 40.

The extreme heat in the room automatically deals 1d6 fire damage per minute of exposure. Anyone wearing metal armor is affected as if by a *heat metal* spell. The heavy smoke in the room requires a Fortitude save each round (DC 15 + 1 per previous check) to avoid spending that round coughing and sputtering. Any character that chokes for two consecutive rounds takes 1d6 nonlethal damage. The smoke also provides concealment.

Creatures: A trio of nessian warhounds, on loan from an associate in the Nine Hells, stands guard here ready to attack intruders.

Nessian Warhounds (3): hp 100 each; *Monster Manual* 151.

Traps: The bookshelf is guarded with a *symbol of insanity*, which is set to activate when any of the books are removed. The tomes are bound in iron, and contain pages made of etched copper plates. Each book is hot to the touch, dealing 1d6 fire damage each round. If removed from the extreme heat, they cool on their own in 7 rounds.

Symbol of Insanity: CR 8; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*symbol of insanity*, CL 15th, Will DC 22 negates); Search DC 33; Disable Device 33.

Treasure: Flipping through each tome requires five rounds apiece, and there are 100 of them contained in the bookshelf. One is a spellbook containing *dominate monster*, *freedom*, and *time stop*. Another is the *Curse of Carceri*, a dangerous book identical to a *vacuous grimoire*. The rest posses various bits of fiendish knowledge, among which is a treatise on arcanaloths which can add a +10 bonus to Knowledge checks relating to the creatures. It also has a benefit in Event Eight.

A secret compartment hidden in the desk (Search DC 30) contains two fireproof ceramic scroll cases. These each contain a scroll inked in blood on the arcanaloth's personal stationary (stretched human skin). The scrolls themselves are not resistant to fire, and if they are opened within this room, the extreme heat reduces them to ash in 3 rounds. The scrolls are written in Abyssal and Infernal, and contain messages and reports from the pit fiend Agnzari and the balor Taruleil. Careful examination of these reports (requiring at least 5 minutes) reveals that instead of presenting a unified threat, the two sides have been fighting each other. While Sharlocke has been extolling the benefits of mutual cooperation, the Blood War hate runs deeper. So far, the arcanaloth has managed to maintain a careful balancing act, but the situation could explode at any moment.

Piramus's Bluff vs. The Amir's Sense Motive

+61 Bluff check vs. +20 Sense Motive	Modifier
The PCs beat his Perform check during the evening of entertainment.	–2
The PCs display any forged documents they find in Piramus's quarters.	–15
The PCs prove the visions of the worlds for sale are falsified.	–10
The PCs dispel his *glibness*.	–30
The PCs won at least four of the five points during their debate with Zin.	–2
The PCs won the duel with Marsk.	–4

Sharlocke's Intimidate vs. The Amir's Resistance

+57 modified Intimidate check vs. +26 to resist	Modifier
The PCs have the reports of the fiendish generals from Sharlocke's quarters.	–10
The PCs pledge to protect the janni against the generals of the lower planes.	–5
The PCs use the knowledge about arcanaloths in the iron tome in his room.	–5
The PCs successfully aided Claudliplude during his debate.	–8
The PCs won at least four of the five points during their debate with Zin.	–2
The PCs won the duel with Marsk.	–4

EVENT EIGHT: FINAL DEBATE (EL 20)

After the morning breakfast, the three remaining diplomats take their positions for the final negotiation.

During the night, Piramus has been busy. He set up a series of goblets next to each chair in the balcony, within easy reach of anyone seated. The goblets are smeared with dragon bile and filled with wine poisoned by lich dust. Piramus then hid the goblets in the Ethereal Plane using multiple *teleport object* scrolls, ready to be dispelled at his whim.

The final debate is composed of three sections, the mercane's final argument (a Bluff check), the arcanaloth's final argument (an Intimidate check with a +20 circumstance bonus), and the PCs' final argument (a Diplomacy check). The first two require a single opposed roll against the Amir, while the PCs attempt to sabotage their arguments with the negative modifiers on the charts above. If the PCs successfully undermine their opponents' arguments to the point where the Amir beats both of their checks, then the PCs win the final debate by default. If he is fooled, intimidated, or both, then PCs must roll a single Diplomacy check against a DC of 10 plus the amount by which the Amir failed his rolls. If that check fails, then the Amir's failed rolls determine whether Piramus or the Arcanaloth wins.

Development: If the PCs win the debate, Sharlocke roars his outrage and promises death to the janni and the PCs. He teleports back to his room to sulk and try to salvage his plans. Piramus congratulates the PCs whole-heartedly and dispels the *teleport object* effects cast on the goblets. He smoothly raises a glass of his own, and the janni naturally follow suit. Almost immediately, all eight honor guards buckle and collapse under the weight of their own armor. The Amir, immune to the poison, throws down his cup and flees to his chambers in an effort to protect the contract.

Piramus attacks the PCs, along with his two bodyguards. Spurred on by the *gem of entropic perspective*, he fights to the death and reveals his true persona, a deranged personality spouting gibberish and cackling with mad glee.

Piramus Aristedes: hp 206; see Appendix.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs win the final debate, give them a CR 20 experience award.

EVENT NINE: SHARLOCKE'S ASSAULT (CR 22)

While the PCs battle Piramus, Sharlocke notices that the honor guard is incapacitated, and that the Amir dropped the *wall of force* before entering his personal chambers. Faking rage, he uses *greater teleport* to return to his room, and places his *dimensional shackles* on his own wrists to prevent the Amir from sending him away. Then he uses *shapechange* to turn himself into a horsefly and slips into the Amir's quarters before the *wall of force* goes back up.

The Amir uses his *glove of storing* on the mine contract, then restores the *wall of force*. When Sharlocke reverts to his true form, the Amir is startled and attempts

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"Diplomacy" is designed for a group of four 18th-level PCs, but it can be adapted for almost any high-level party. Almost all the foes the PCs face are creatures with class levels, simply requiring an addition or subtraction of levels to reflect the average party level.

to use his *plane shift* ability on the fiend. Sharlocke counters the Amir with a *maze* spell, removing his influence but also the contracts. This effectively dispels any *wall of force* effects he had up.

When the PCs finish with Piramus, they hear yells of rage and frustration. If they enter the Amir's chambers, they can see that Sharlocke has torn the room asunder, unable to find his prize. He immediately attacks the PCs in anger. When he is brought below 30 hit points, he exclaims that he is not finished with them yet, tears free his *dimensional shackles*, then uses his last scroll of *plane shift* to escape.

Sharlocke: hp 363; see Appendix.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

It is quite possible that the PCs fail to win the mines for Elysium. If this happens, they have plenty of opportunities to remedy their mistakes—the newly freed monsters in Elysium require a great deal of help to contain. Meanwhile, the winner of the debate is able to put his plans in motion. If Zin defeats the PCs in the first round, he easily out-maneuvers the other diplomats in the final debate and claims the mines. Shortly afterward, an army of modrons quickly gains strength in the Multiverse, rigidly enforcing the laws of Mechanus wherever they go. If Sharlocke gets the mines, he uses the wealth to alter the course of the Blood War for his own further profit while Shemeska makes great strides toward the recovery of the *Staff of the Lower Planes*. If Piramus wins, he uses the mines to spawn a host of chaos artifacts, which he sells to unsuspecting merchants. Ultimately, the epic mercane city of Union falls into chaos, and Piramus sets up a monopoly on magical items.

If the PCs prevail, the Amir finds his way out of the *maze* spell and attempts to restore order. He thanks the PCs for their aid, and congratulates them on their victory. As his honor guards recover and the servants began mopping up the mess, the Amir signs the contracts and offers them to the PCs. He also invites them to a celebration on the Material Plane, where the details of the sale are finalized.

On Mechanus, Primus takes a personal interest in the PCs, and sends modrons to monitor their progress, patiently watching and waiting for them to break a cosmic law.

The information Sharlocke leaked to the Abyss andHell causes several fiendish incursions into the Material Plane, and eventually into the Valley of Light, perhaps causing Ivixel to call on the PCs again to aid in its defense. Not only that, the PCs have proven their capabilities to the yugoloth hierarchy, and at the very least can expect to be monitored carefully by such planar personalities as the Oinoloth Mydianchlarus; Helekanalaith, the Keeper of the Tower Arcane in Gehenna; and Shemeska the Marauder herself.

APPENDIX: THE DIPLOMATS

SHARLOCKE **CR 23**

Arcanaloth sorcerer 2, archmage 4

NE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar, yugoloth)

Monster Manual II 203 (updated for 3.5)

Init +14; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Listen +34, Spot +34

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elven, Ignan, Infernal, Terran; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 44, touch 24, flat-footed 34

hp 363 (24 HD); **DR** 15/good and silver

Immune acid, mind affecting, poison

Resist cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 26

Fort +24, **Ref** +23, **Will** +23

Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)

Melee 2 claws +32 (1d6+5 plus 1d6 Strength drain) and bite +27 (2d6+2)

Base Atk +21; **Grp** +26

Atk Options Arcane Strike, Flyby Attack

Special Actions *summon yugoloth*

Combat Gear scroll of *horrid wilting*, scroll of *plane shift* (2), scroll of *prying eyes*, scroll of *true seeing*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 24th; +31 ranged touch)

9th (3/day)—*shapechange*

8th (4/day)—*maze, Otto's irresistible dance*

7th (5/day)—*delayed blast fireball* (DC 29), *prismatic spray* (DC 29), *project image*

6th (7/day)—*chain lightning* (DC 28), *disintegrate* (DC 27), *greater dispel magic*

5th (6/day)—*cone of cold* (DC 27), *feeblemind* (DC 25), *sending, wall of force*

4th (7/day)—*Evard's black tentacles, fire shield, locate creature, wall of fire*

3rd (8/day)—*blink, fireball* (DC 25), *lightning bolt* (DC 25), *slow* (DC 24)

2nd (8/day)—*locate object, glitterdust* (DC 22), *scorching ray, see invisibility, shatter* (DC 24)

1st (8/day)—*burning hands* (DC 23), *comprehend languages, mage armor, shield, shocking grasp*

0 (6/day)—*acid splash, arcane mark, detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 20), *mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 17th)

At will—*alter self, darkness, fear* (DC 24), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *heat metal, invisibility, magic missile, major image* (DC 23), *telekinesis, warp wood* (DC 22)

Abilities Str 20, Dex 30, Con 32, Int 23, Wis 18, Cha 31

SQ arcane reach (2), flight, mastery of elements, spell power, summon familiar (none), swift evoker

Feats Arcane Strike, Empower Spell, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Initiative, Practiced Spellcaster (+4 CL), Skill Focus (spellcraft), Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Focus (transmutation), Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +36, Concentration +39, Decipher Script +28, Diplomacy +37, Forgery +28, Gather Information +32, Intimidate +37, Knowledge (arcana) +34, Knowledge (the planes) +33, Knowledge (history) +33, Listen +34, Spellcraft +36, Spot +34, Use Magic Device +32

Possessions combat gear, *bracers of armor +5, ring of protection +3, amulet of health +4, cloak of Charisma +6, dimensional shackles, ioun stones* (dusty rose, orange, and pale green)

Arcane Strike Activating this feat is a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. When an arcanaloth activates this feat, he channels arcane energy into a melee weapon, an unarmed strike, or his

natural weapons. He must sacrifice one of his spells for the day (of 1st level or higher) to do this, but gains a bonus on all attack rolls for 1 round equal to the level of the spell sacrificed, as well as extra damage equal to 1d4 points × the level of the spell sacrificed. This feat originally appeared in *Complete Warrior.*

Flight (Su) An arcanaloth's ability to fly is a constant magical effect that cannot be dispelled.

Strength Drain (Su) A creature hit by an arcanaloth's claw attack must succeed on a DC 28 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of Strength drain. On a successful save, the creature takes only 1 point of Strength drain. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Summon Yugoloth (Sp) Once per day, an arcanaloth can automatically summon another arcanaloth. A summoned arcanaloth remains for 1 hour. This ability is the equivalent of a 9th-level spell.

Swift Evoker (Ex) An arcanaloth is particularly adept at quickly casting spells of the school of evocation. Once every 1d4 rounds, an arcanaloth may cast any evocation spell it knows as a free action, as if it were a quickened spell. An arcanaloth may cast evocation spells in this manner even if that spell is cast on the fly. Many arcanaloths are fond of casting *burning hands* in this manner as they attack with their claws.

Skills Arcanaloths gain a +8 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

Tactics: Sharlocke uses *shapechange* often, altering forms if he needs to restore hit points. His favorite forms are girallons, iron golems, and white dragons. He sticks to spellcasting, using his swift evoker ability to get off two spells per round. He tries to separate and incapacitate large numbers as quickly as possible, using *maze, Otto's irresistible dance* (cast as a ranged touch spell with arcane reach), and *wall of force.* With remaining opponents, he uses empowered *delayed blast fireball, chain lightning, disintegrate,* and other destructive magic, using his elemental mastery to switch energy types to avoid protective spells (he is especially fond of sonic *delayed blast fireballs*) while staying out of melee range. If he runs low on spells, he switches to martial tactics, using Arcane Strike in conjunction with *shapechange* to eviscerate foes.

Piramus Aristedes **CR 19**

Mercane bard 9/spymaster 7

CN Large outsider

Complete Adventurer 77, *Epic Level Handbook* 204

Init +4; **Senses** Listen +13, Spot +13

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal, Aquan; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 26 touch 13, flat-footed 22

hp 206 (23 HD) **DR** 5/lawful

Immune poison, mind-affecting **SR** 25

Fort +15, **Ref** +20, **Will** +17; slippery mind

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +22/+17/+12/+7 (1d6+1 plus poison) or
mwk dagger +20/+15/+10/+5 (1d6+2 plus poison) and
mwk dagger +20 (1d6+1 plus poison)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +18; **Grp** +23

Atk Options Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Quick Draw, sneak attack +2d6

Special Actions bardic music 9/day (countersong, *fascinate,* inspire courage +2, inspire competence, inspire greatness, *suggestion* [DC 18]), dispel scrying

Combat Gear scroll of *arcane sight,* scroll of *heal* (2), scroll of *plane shift* (5), scroll of *greater scrying* (2), scroll of *sending* (10), scroll of *teleport object* (10), scroll of *true seeing, wand of cure critical wounds* (20 charges), *wand of dispel magic* (38 charges), *wand of greater invisibility* (48 charges)

Spells Known (CL 9th, +21 ranged touch)
3rd (3/day)—*blink, clairaudience, glibness*
2nd (4/day)—*alter self, silence* (DC 18), *summon swarm, whispering wind*
1st (4/day)—*comprehend languages, expeditious retreat, identify, ventriloquism*
0 (3/day)—*detect magic, ghost sound, mage hand, prestidigitation, read magic, summon instrument*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th)
At will—*Nystul's magic aura* (CL 7th)
3/day—*dimension door, invisibility*
1/day—*Leomund's secret chest, plane shift* (DC 23)

Abilities Str 12, Dex 18, Con 20, Int 24, Wis 14, Cha 22

SQ bardic knowledge +16, cover identity, deep cover, quick change, scrying defense, undetectable alignment

Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Iron Will, Magical Aptitude, Quick Draw, Skill Focus (Use Magic Device), Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

Skills Appraise +37, Bluff +31 (+61 with *glibness*), Concentration +10, Decipher Script +12, Diplomacy +37, Disable Device +19, Disguise +20 (+22 acting), Gather Information +25, Intimidate +11, Forgery +11, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge (history) +22, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +33, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Listen +13, Perform (oratory) +25, Profession (bookkeeper) +8, Search +17, Sense Motive +28, Sleight of Hand +22, Spellcraft +30 (+37 to decipher scrolls), Spot +13, Use Magic Device +30 (+39 for scrolls)

Possessions combat gear, *glamered +5 studded leather, bag of holding (type I), gem of entropic perspective, periapt of proof against poison, ring of counterspells (analyze dweomer), spellsight spectacles,* 2 doses of wyvern poison, 3 doses of dark reaver powder, 2 doses of black lotus extract, 2 doses of id moss, 3 doses of burnt othur fumes, 2 large daggers smeared with purple worm poison

Cover Identity (Ex) While the true nature of the mercane is now composed of pure chaos and all-consuming greed, he is able to maintain three separate cover identities to achieve his ends. Operating in an identity gives the mercane a +4 to Disguise checks, and a +2 circumstance bonus to Bluff and Gather Information checks (already incorporated into the stat block).

Quick Change (Ex) Piramus can quickly switch from one identity to another, donning a disguise in one-tenth the normal time (1d3 minutes) and donning or removing armor in one-half the normal time.

Dispel Scrying (Su) Piramus can dispel a scrying sensor as if casting a targeted *greater dispel magic* as a 17th-level caster.

Deep Cover (Ex) While in a cover identity, divination spells detect only information appropriate to the cover identity; they reveal nothing about the true persona.

Scrying Defense (Ex) Pirimus gets a +7 bonus on Will saves vs. divination (scrying) spells, as well as Spot checks to notice sensors created by such spells

Tactics: Piramus attempts to attack with surprise, keeping himself mobile and invisible and his minions in front of him. He makes liberal use of his poisons to quickly incapacitate physically weak spellcasters before moving on to his supply of magic wands and scrolls. Piramus always sizes up weaknesses and tactics of his opponents prior to battle. After the PCs duel Arcturian, Pirimus orders 50,000 gp worth of scrolls from Union in anticipation of possible combat. By the time the final debate starts, these scrolls have arrived. You should tailor the exact nature of these scrolls to your PCs' tactics, but here is a sample list: *Mordinkainen's disjunction, time stop, implosion, power word: stun, protection from spells, horrid wilting, dimensional lock, forcecage, delayed blast fireball, word of chaos, limited wish, iron body, disintegrate, chain lightning, flesh to stone, heal, death ward, freedom of movement.*

Arcturian Marsk CR 20
Male human swashbuckler 20
N Medium humanoid
Complete Warrior 11
Init +12; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot +4
Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Halfling

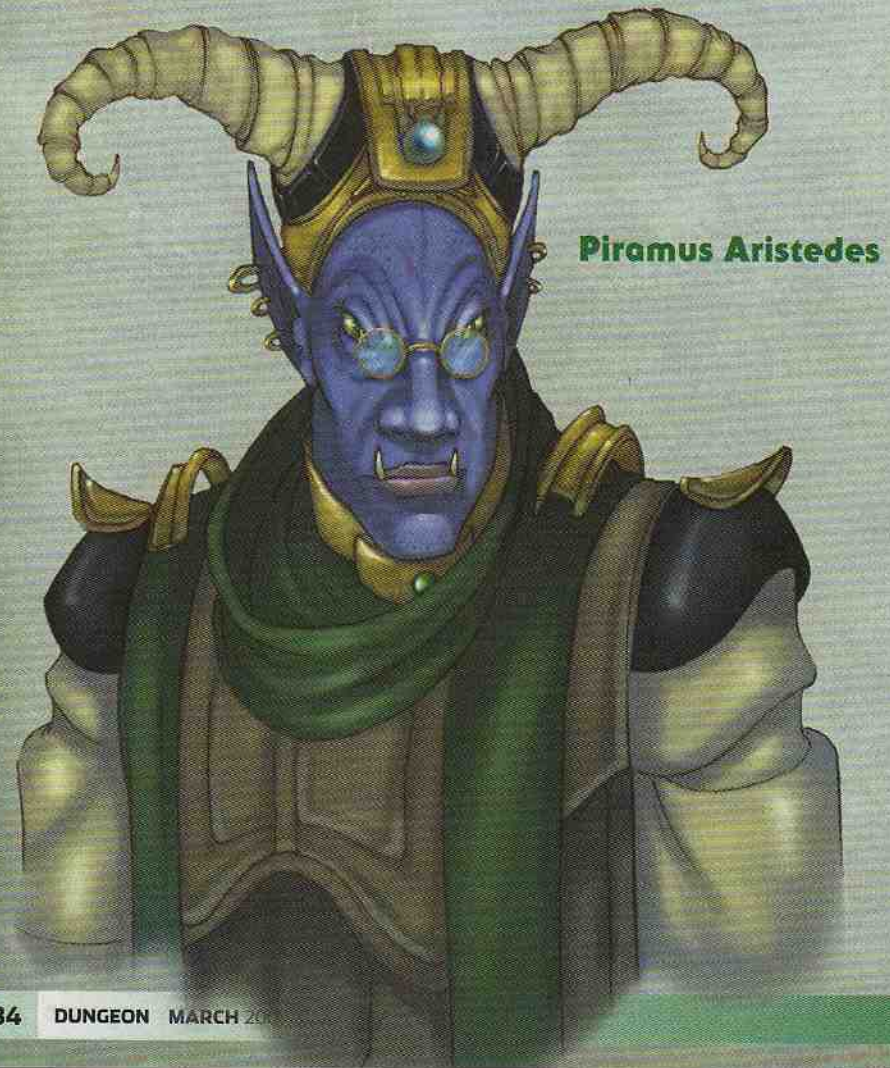
AC 25, touch 18, flat-footed 17; Dodge +5, Mobility
hp 153 (20 HD)
SR 20
Fort +14, **Ref** +17, **Will** +5; slippery mind

Spd 40 ft.
Melee *+3 wounding rapier* +32/+27/+22/+17 (1d6+9/15–20 plus wounding)
Base Atk +20; **Grp** +22
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Spring Attack, insightful strike, weakening critical, wounding critical
Combat Gear *potion of barskin* (+5), *potion of cure serious wounds* (5), *potion of fox's cunning, potion of fly, potion of heroism*

Abilities Str 14, Dex 26*, Con 14, Int 18*, Wis 8, Cha 15
SQ acrobatic charge, acrobatic skill mastery, improved flanking, insightful strike, lucky 1/day
Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Critical (rapier), Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)
Skills Balance +33, Bluff +25, Climb +15, Diplomacy +29, Escape Artist +31, Jump +27, Sense Motive +12, Spot +4, Swim +12, Tumble +33
Possessions combat gear, *+3 rapier of wounding, bracers of armor +7, amulet of health +2, belt of giant Strength +4, cloak of Charisma +2, gloves of Dexterity +6, boots of striding and springing, ring of spell storing (improved invisibility, shield), ring of minor spell storing (protection from elements)*, masterwork composite longbow, masterwork greatsword, masterwork halberd, mithral full plate
*+2 inherent bonus to Dex and Int

Acrobatic Charge (Ex) Marsk can charge over terrain that normally slows movement or allies blocking his path. This ability enables him to run down steep stairs, leap down from a balcony, or tumble over tables to get to his target. He still may have to make the appropriate checks (Tumble, Jump, etc.) to successfully move over the terrain.
Lucky (Ex) Marsk may reroll any failed attack roll, skill check, ability check, or saving throw. He must take the result of the new roll, even if it is worse.
Insightful Strike (Ex) Marsk adds his Intelligence bonus to damage rolls with any weapon that can be used with Weapon Finesse. Targets immune to critical hits are also immune to insightful strike. Marsk cannot use this ability when wearing medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load.
Improved Flanking (Ex) Marsk gets a +4 bonus to attack a flanked opponent, instead of +2.
Acrobatic Skill Mastery (Ex) Marsk may take 10 on Tumble and Jump checks, even if stress and distractions would normally prevent it.
Weakening/Wounding Critical (Ex) Marsk deals 2 points of Strength and Constitution damage on a successful critical hit.

Tactics: Arcturian stays mobile, and uses his speed and his ability to move over rough terrain to his advantage. He charges unprotected spellcasters, using



Piramus Aristedes

full attack actions to take them down quickly. When fighting heavily armored fighters, he uses hit and run tactics to wear them down before moving in for the killing strike.

ZIN, REPRESENTATIVE OF PRIMUS CR 19

Tertian modron
LN Large construct (extraplanar, lawful)
Web enhancement for *Manual of the Planes* (updated to 3.5)
Init 18 (fixed); **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +38, Spot +38
Languages Modron; telepathy 405 miles

AC 39, touch 14, flat-footed 34
hp 199 (26 HD); **DR** 15/adamantine and chaotic
Immune construct traits
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 31
Fort +10, **Ref** +13, **Will** +17

Spd 30 ft.
Melee* tail slap +30 (4d6+22 plus stunning blow) and
2 slams +27 (2d6+11)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +19; **Grp** +36
Atk Options Cleave, Power Attack
Spells Known (CL 19th; +23 ranged touch)
9th (4/day)—*gate, time stop*
8th (7/day)—*demand* (DC 26), *dimensional lock, shield of law* (DC 26)
7th (7/day)—*dictum, greater scrying* (DC 25), *plane shift* (DC 25)
6th (7/day)—*antimagic field, greater dispel magic, symbol of persuasion* (DC 24)
5th (7/day)—*dismissal, dispel chaos, hold monster* (DC 23), *sending*
4th (8/day)—*dimensional anchor, charm monster* (DC 22), *freedom of movement, order's wrath* (DC 22)
3rd (8/day)—*dispel magic, fly, haste, protection from energy*
2nd (8/day)—*detect thoughts* (DC 20), *hold person* (DC 20), *calm emotions* (DC 20), *levitate, locate object*
1st (8/day)—*cure light wounds, divine favor, mage armor, shield, protection from chaos*
0 (6/day)—*arcane mark, cure minor wounds, detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 17), *mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 19th)
At will—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, command* (DC 19), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *wall of force*
3/day—quickened *wall of force*
*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 36, Dex 21, Con —, Int 30, Wis 28, Cha 26
SQ fixed initiative
Feats Cleave, Empower Spell, Extend Spell, Great Fortitude, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Maximize Spell, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*wall of force*)
Skills Concentration +29, Diplomacy +41, Gather Information +37, Intimidate +37, Knowledge (arcana) +39, Knowledge (history) +39, Knowledge (the planes) +39, Listen +38, Search +39, Sense Motive +38, Spellcraft +43, Spot +38

Fixed Initaitive (Ex) Modrons have a limited form of prescience that governs when they take action in a conflict, and they never waver from this schedule. As a result, a modron's initiative check is always equal to half its Hit Dice, modified by its Dexterity modifier. When combat begins, a modron uses this number as its initiative—it never rolls an initiative check.
Spells A tertian modron casts spells as a 19th-level sorcerer, and can also choose spells from the cleric list and from the Law domain for its list of spells known. The cleric spells and domain spells are considered arcane spells for a tertian modron, meaning that the creature does not need a divine focus to cast them.
Stunning Blow (Ex) A creature struck by a tertian's tail slam must make a DC 36 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Strength-based.

Tactics: If attacked, Zin casts *time stop* immediately, then casts *plane shift* to travel to Mechanus to report the failure of negotiations. Depending on the circumstances of the assault, Primus almost certainly sends a measured response to the aggression within 1d4 hours.

Chris would like to dedicate this adventure to his old high school gaming group: Michael Cassidy, Nathanial Klinck, Michael Morrical, and Abraham Younce, all of whom taught him how to enjoy a session of D&D without casting a single die. His previous efforts include "Wingclipper's Revenge" in #132 and "Riding the Rail" in #143.

GEM OF ENTROPIC PERSPECTIVE

This cursed minor artifact was born when two particularly unstable *chaos diamonds* touched, creating a feedback vortex that fused the two together into a single diamond. The large multifaceted stone sparkles with brilliant clarity. It resembles a diamond in cut and color, but often changes to rose, light blue, or yellow to match nearby gemstones. Every few minutes, a sparkle of light flashes from within, bursting through the diamond in a brilliant rainbow of color.

When picked up, the stone immediately attempts to change the alignment of the wielder to chaotic neutral (Will DC 21 negates). If the saving throw is successful, the diamond sends out a backlash of chaotic energy, dealing 6d6 damage (no save). If the wielder's alignment changes or the wielder is already chaotic neutral to begin with, the gem begins to exert its influence. It grants the wielder a +4 enhancement bonus to Intelligence and a –4 penalty to Wisdom. The wielder is immune to all mind-affecting effects, and gains damage reduction 5/lawful.

Whenever the *gem of entropic perspective* comes in contact with a similar-sized diamond (minimum value of 200,000 gp), its powers duplicate in the other stone, resulting in two separate artifacts. There is no limit to this ability.

Overwhelming transmutation; CL 21st; Weight 1/2 lb.

SPELLSIGHT SPECTACLES

(*Complete Adventurer* 135)

These spectacles grant the wearer a +5 competence bonus on Spellcraft checks made to decipher schools, and a +5 competence bonus to Use Magic Device checks made to use scrolls.

Faint divination; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *read magic*; Price 2,500 gp.

SPOTLIGHT: FOCUSING ON PLAYERS

BY WOLFGANG BAUR
BY KYLE HUNTER

As a DM, it's all too easy to think you are at the center of the game; after all, you may have written the adventure, and you're certainly running it. People listen when you talk, and the story really only advances with some help from you. Still, that's a narrow view of what happens around the table—the characters are the heroes of the story, and DMs should try to make sure that every character gets plenty of time in the spotlight.

It's not easy to balance different player types and different play styles, so this month I'll look at a few simple ways to consistently give your players and their characters ways to shine. Your more aggressive players don't need much help, but at my table, at least, there are always a few quieter players that deserve equal table time.

KNOW THE CHARACTERS

Find out what the highest skill is for each character in the party. You can probably guess some of these, such as Bluff for a rogue, Perform for a bard, Heal for a cleric, or Ride for a paladin. Write them on a note card and stick it inside your DM screen. That way, when a situation comes up requiring a skill check, you know which PC is best equipped to

handle it, and if you have to make a DC on the fly, you can see what numbers create good or bad odds for the most competent PC.

You want characters to succeed at the things they are good at during most play sessions. If they don't have a chance to use those skills, why bother investing points in them? Give players an opportunity, even if they don't succeed.

Certainly, not all characters are skill-based, but this is all the more reason to reward the characters who spend their few points in something meaningful. A sorcerer or a fighter may not have a lot of skill ranks, so he wants the ones he does have to count. Make sure that the fighter who chooses Intimidate gets to be a hulking bully fairly often, even if it just means introducing a weaselly secretary at the entrance to an audience chamber or an unscheduled bouncer at the door of the taverns. Likewise, the sorcerer should be able to Bluff past that secretary or bouncer, or use his Knowledge (arcana) to spot the significance of a particular kind of summoning circle or the corruption of wards against evil.

Match your encounters to your player's non-combat skills just as much as you match them to their party level.

KNOW THE PLAYERS

Your friend John may play a paladin for the munchkin bonuses. Another player plays a paladin because he wants religious justification for mayhem. A third may want to play out the defense of the weak and the poor, and seeks causes that are worthy. The first two players will likely enjoy any combat opportunity against evil foes, while the third may grow frustrated if the adventures his paladin finds are all item quests that don't involve saving any meek or helpless innocents.

The easiest way to know what players want for their heroes is to ask them. Many players make a character with a particular idea of heroism in mind. A bard may hope to deliver a stirring speech to calm rioting villagers. A cleric may dream of outfoxing a devil in a contest for souls. A ninja may dream of a nighttime raid that happens without a sound, and a ranger may hope for a forced march across the wilderness with a vital message. Others may not ask for more than heads to split and dragons to slay. The exact nature of the heroic dream can be anything; the point is, these things are all RPG gold. Make sure that players get the kind of heroism they want. There's still plenty of room in any adventure for DM invention and creativity, and you'll notice that players are much more involved in your game when the goals match their character goals.

Ask your players for "future challenges." Tell them you are writing up a scenario and need just a few more ideas for upcoming scenes. You may not use these right away, and you may bend and twist them a bit to suit your plot arc, but when you deliver on these scenes, you'll have the players in the palm of your hand. These are the moments that players game for, so don't leave them up to chance.

FAILURE IS AN OPTION

Heroes are heroes because they save the day, right? Wrong. Failure is just as entertaining as success, and often more so.

I mentioned before that you should find out the highest skills in the party; for each super-maxed skill, you should also find out who in the party has the lowest ranks (or ability modifier) for that skill. The reason for this is simple: players will often forgive you from making their characters' lives miserable if it's funny. If the gold coins are only gold-plated, if the uncouth fighter is suddenly put on the spot in front of the Duke, if the smarty-pants evoker wizard who studies only offensive magic must keep a group of bored nobles entertained while the rogue investigates their chambers—it's funny because it's a fish out of water. It's not something for every encounter or every session, but it's a tool for every DM to remember, especially when you consider that it's even funnier when it happens to the attention-hogs at your table. Pushy players may learn to back off sometimes if they suffer lasting consequences for failure when the fighter horns in on the cleric's territory, or vice versa. The consequences have to stick, though.

THE ATTENTION SPOTLIGHT

Players know that the DM is the game's information bottleneck, so experienced gamers listen and watch for clues from you about what is important in a scene, using that information to be in the right position when the time comes for action, whether that's combat or a well-timed Bluff. Think of the DM's attention as a spotlight that directs the game action. Sometimes you need to feint with the spotlight, to keep the same players from always dominating the game.

So how do you make sure that the wrong character sometimes winds up in the right place? One method is to rely on timing and distractions to pull heroes out of position. For distraction, you need to know what works in attracting a particular character: an unusual animal for a druid, a visitor at a small shrine for a cleric, etc. To enforce position, miniatures help, even during non-combat encounters. If the rogue's curiosity gets the best of him and he wanders off to explore the Duke's wine cellar or gets too distracted by the gold cutlery, then he won't be available for a Sense Motive or Bluff when the Duke asks the tough questions. Make sure that if the party is even partly divided, the NPCs aren't always right next to the character with the strong Spot or social skills.

The moment a speech begins, call for a Diplomacy check. You can often predict when the party might end up caught up in a lie or be forced to fast talk their way out of a situation. For instance, a party sent by a powerful merchant patron to meet with the groundskeeper of an enormous necropolis might well not plan to tell the groundskeeper that they're really there to do some tomb-robbing. Their cover stories might be inventive or they might be dull, but they'll certainly be required. If a character without a strong Bluff skill tries to pull a fast one, ask for that roll. After all, groundskeepers are paid to be suspicious, and aren't likely

to wait around for the distracted bard to return and spin a new cover story if the original character botches the job. If the party is then escorted to the exit and the necropolis guards are doubled—well, the party should probably work on its non-combat skills.

There's a simple trick to getting an answer from a particular player, by the way: eye contact. Making eye contact with a player as you ask a question often prompts them to answer you, either in or out of character. When they do, ask for that Bluff check—the one you know they don't have any ranks in. In addition to forwarding the plot of your adventure, setting up such a failure can be a useful, if drastic, way of reminding an attention hog to let those most suited to a situation take control.

Finally, you need to track how often the spotlight shines on each PC. You can do this with coins, dice, or whatever: every time someone at the table gets a big scene or a big moment, up their coin pile or die counter by one. If there's someone at your table with a "zero" count near the end of the session, there's something wrong, and you should make sure there are rich opportunities for that character to enjoy during the next game session.

THE HEROIC MOMENT

In the fury of combat or the rapid-fire chatter of a crucial Bluff check, it's easy to lose track of a PC's success. I like to set up certain story moments ahead of time as the times when I deliberately slow down and describe the action with an extra sentence. To mark these for myself in the notes or adventure I'm running the game from, I use a yellow highlighter.

The idea here is that the stakes are higher in this encounter than any other. If a henchmen or an innocent bystander's life is at risk, I always make it clear that there's a countdown timer (until the cultists sacrifice their victim, say, or until the bleeding henchman is dragged off the map by the mob of hobgoblins). If the party can't overcome the problem in that round, they lose that particular goal. It's crucial that you don't fudge these; if the party doesn't get to the cultists because they don't want to take the extra attacks of opportunity from moving through threatened squares, well, that says something about that hero, right?

The following list of clichéd-but-powerful scenes includes most of the situations I typically highlight.

The Big Mook: When the heroes have a chance to take out the highest hp monster in a group of similar creatures, I always highlight it. When he's close to knocked down, I describe the effect of finishing him off (or failing to).

The Threatened PC: If a character is grievously wounded and still in combat, it's worth pointing out their courage (or desperation) by mentioning their wounds each round on their initiative. Describing the wounds makes the decision to stay in combat tougher and builds the character up for sticking it out.

The Crucial Clue: Some investigations have one clue that pulls it all together. This can be easier to do as a montage or fast-forward description: "You search the records of the Rogue's Guild for days, and the amount of fencing, selling, bribes, and initiations all blur together. But on the fifth day, you see a very strange entry—it looks like this." All of the buildup, plus the use of a handout, makes it clear that this is an important bit of information.

The Long Shot: Ranged attacks or spells can sometimes be the only hope of preventing a runner from warning others, preventing a chase from starting, or saving an innocent creature held hostage. If the shot is crucial, build the pressure with a little description before the attack roll or saving throw.

The Summoning: When a gate or portal to another plane opens, it should be dramatic—Hell or the Elder Evils might be unleashed on the world. Bonus points for mentioning brimstone.

The Final Stand: When a villain is about to go down, think "movie death scene." I occasionally write a short (50 word) speech for the villain ahead of time. Cursing the PCs and promises to come back from the grave for revenge can also set up or foreshadow future adventures.

The End of the Chase: Whether the party escapes, catches their quarry, or loses the villain entirely, the end of a chase sequence is usually worth a bit of extra description.

CONCLUSION

Keep the spotlight moving, place it on characters who can be expected to fail for humor or a change of pace, and always make sure that the "big moments" at the table get one or two extra words from you to make them stick in the players' memories—your game will be stronger for it.

Wolfgang Baur is a noted adventure designer and the author of "Steam & Brass", a private commission written for patrons. He discusses his freelance work and upcoming patron projects at wolfgangbaur.com.

CAN YOU HELP STOCK THE DUNGEON?

Download our Writer's Guidelines
paizo.com/dungeon

UNUSUAL BURIALS

BY PHILLIP LARWOOD
BY KYLE HUNTER

Tombs, crypts, mausoleums, and graveyards are standard fare for adventuring companies, yet while these places are rich in history and lore, they seldom cause the seasoned explorer or treasure hunter to raise an eyebrow. Not every creature is buried in a simple wooden coffin, and some burial practices and sites are so disturbing or perplexing that they can make even the most experienced tomb-plunderer sit up and take notice.

GLASS TOMB

At first glance, this chamber appears normal. Any light source brought close to the walls reveals that they are made from murky green glass rather than stone, and that they contain the bodies of several elves. Every scrap of skin and hair has been burnt from the elves' bodies, yet they appear to have died peacefully, their flayed corpses suspended serenely in a sea of dark olive crystal. The contents of the chamber appear to have nothing to do with the elves entombed within its walls.

TOMB CHIMES

Several large wind chimes dangle from the roof of this airy cavern, whistling eerily in the light breeze blowing through the area. Disturbingly, each of the wind

chimes appears to have been constructed from a single humanoid skeleton. Each skeleton has been tethered together with dried fish gut and pierced and hollowed out to create an eerie whistling effect. A name or word in Common is painted on the skull of each wind chime in dark blue ink.

BATH GRAVE

This small chamber contains a cracked and stained porcelain bathtub with feet shaped like stirges and peeling gold ornamentation along the sides. The bathtub is completely filled with rich black dirt not found in the area, the soil forming a leveled heap upon which has been placed a bouquet of wilting violets. A skeletal hand protrudes from beneath the dirt to clutch the bouquet. The hand appears to belong to an elven or human woman and wears a simple gold wedding band.

WANDERING COFFIN

Lumbering down the corridor is the rotting corpse of an ogre. The zombie drags a greatclub behind it and stares listlessly ahead as it stumbles along. Lashed to the ogre's back with thick iron chains is a simple darkwood coffin. The coffin is large enough to hold the body of an ordinary human and bears no runes or other identifying marks of any kind. The iron chains that hold the coffin to the ogre's back cut into the ogre's decaying flesh and further add to its already fearsome appearance.

PEARL COFFIN

In the cloudy depths of the ocean sits a giant oyster the size of a small cart. The oyster contains the skeletal remains of a humanoid creature with a fish-like head. The oyster has slowly encased some of the skeleton and its possessions in lustrous silver pearl, including the skeleton's metal breastplate, but not its coral trident. While other giant oysters are in the vicinity, only this one (which also happens to be the largest) contains a body.

XORN COFFIN

Off to the side of this large cavern is an elder xorn. At first glance the xorn appears to be alive, but it is merely the creature's preserved remains and is not dangerous. Upon closer examination it becomes clear that the xorn has a cut down the middle, and that the creature can be prized open with a bit of effort to give access to its interior. Those who do so discover that the elder xorn's chest cavity is hollow and contains the skeleton of a noble dwarf in full battle regalia.

LAYERED SARCOPHAGUS

This burial chamber contains an ostentatious stone sarcophagus large enough to fit a hill giant. Those who open the sarcophagus find a second, smaller marble sarcophagus with ivory and silver inlays. Those who open this sarcophagus find a third sarcophagus of dark basalt inlaid with chalcedony and gold. This process continues for 6 more sarcophagi (each constructed from increasingly valuable materials) until the final sarcophagus is reached. The last sarcophagus is constructed from adamantine and is just large enough to house the corpse of a pixie, goblin, or halfling.

DRACONIC BONEYARD

Aside from its isolated location, this cemetery appears to be little different from most, yet those who explore it discover that much of the space consists of a single immense grave that stretches almost 40 feet in length. The upturned soil that marks the site of the grave is icy cold to the touch, and strange white fungal blooms that resemble puffball mushrooms sprout from the area. From the air the grave has a vaguely draconic shape, and it becomes clear that the other graves have been placed around the larger grave in a strange spiral pattern.

ROOTBONE SARCOPHAGUS

The trunk of an ancient oak tree lies in this chamber, the wood cut and scored by countless blades. A small, healthy-looking sapling rises from the center of the trunk into the air. The trunk has been hollowed out and contains the bones of a small woman who appears to have met her end violently. The sapling's roots are disturbingly intertwined with the skeleton's rib cage, and the thriving sapling does not appear to have any access to either soil or water.

LAVA BURIAL

Floating upon a river of searing lava is a massive funerary barge made of stone. Upon the barge rests the figure of a giant, covered with a black burial shroud and surrounded with treasure, including gold chalices, porphyry statues, obsidian cups, and a jeweled crown. Nothing appears to be steering the funerary barge, and it is slowly headed for a series of lava falls barely visible off in the distance.

SWORD TOMB

This dark sepulchral chamber contains a simple granite sarcophagus with multiple slots on its sides and lid. Longswords have been thrust through some of these slots, yet no signs of blood escape from them. A number of slots remain to be filled, and exactly the same numbers of longswords are mounted on the back wall behind the sarcophagus. A strange moaning sound seems to come from somewhere in the chamber, but its source cannot be identified.

FROZEN TOMB

Deep in the sweltering heat of the desert, atop a massive dune of scorching rust-colored sand, rests a sarcophagus of translucent white ice. Strange alien runes and pictograms are etched into its sides, and the lid bears the image of a bizarre, many-tentacled beast. A dark blot is clearly visible deep within the ice, but it is too difficult to determine if the shape is humanoid or something far more monstous. The sarcophagus is slowly melting, but nowhere near as quickly as it should be. No visible drag marks or footprints can be seen coming to or from the sarcophagus—it is a complete mystery how it arrived at its current destination.

Downer

Fool's Errand

I've spent the better part of my life gallivanting across the planes, so I have no problem finding the way. I wonder if Ba'Roosha is impressed. I'm actually looking forward to hanging out with her, once we put this job to bed. Sigil is an exciting town. If only I didn't have such terrible luck with the birds.

DOWNER TARANTULA, DROW

GOALKEEPER, AURUMACH RILMANI

BA'ROOSHA, GITHYANKI

BENZINGER KALRO, RAKSHASA

KROIPH, COPPER DRAGON

Story and art by **Kyle Stanley Hunter.** Lettering by **Sean Glenn.** Downer is ©2007 Kyle Stanley Hunter. A **Super Unicorn** production. **www.superunicorn.com**

SSSHHOOOP
I'VE GROWN QUITE FOND OF YOU, SO I'D RATHER LET MY BOYS TRY TO CONVINCE YOU.
JOKES ON YOU, BABY! I'M ALWAYS PREPARED TO BE SCREWED OVER BY MY FRIENDS.
YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH THIS.
THIP
THWIP
THIP
HE'S GETTING AWAY!
LET HIM GO. WE GOT WHAT WE NEED.
WE ARE POSITIONED 6 KILOMETERS FROM SIGIL. REMAIN ETHEREAL. THOUGH THEY APPROACH THE ENDGAME, WE CANNOT TAKE THIS SO-CALLED PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION LIGHTLY. WE ARE AVATARS OF DEICIDE--
WE CANNOT BE BLINDED BY OUR DISGUST.
IT WILL BE EASIER TO CLEANSE THE WORLD OF THIS GOD OF GAMING IF WE STRIKE BEFORE HE ASCENDS.
TO BE CONTINUED

FORGOTTEN TOMBS
Map of Mystery
Individual Tombs
Bridge Activation Pillars
Natural Cavern
To Ancient Fortress
Acid Pit
S
S
To Deep Grotto
Secret Catacomb
Ancillary Vault
Ancillary Vault
Limestone Cavern
The Grand Vault
Seal of the Ancients
Beast Den
Secret Crypt
S
Rock Fissure
Cave
Blocked Passage
Underground Lake
1 square = 5 feet
Natural Passage
WEST

DUNGEON #144

MAP & HANDOUT SUPPLEMENT

PRODUCED BY PAIZO PUBLISHING, LLC.
PAIZO.COM

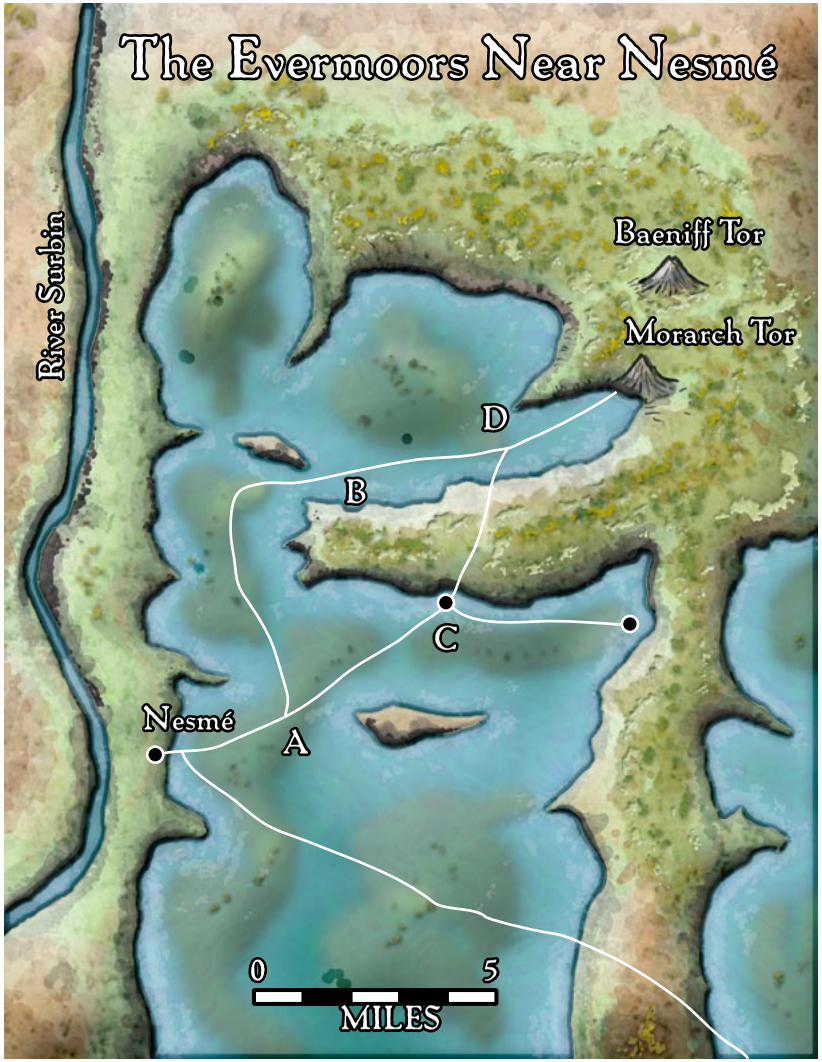
UDON with Joe Ng and Espen Grundetjern

THE MUSTER OF MORACH TOR

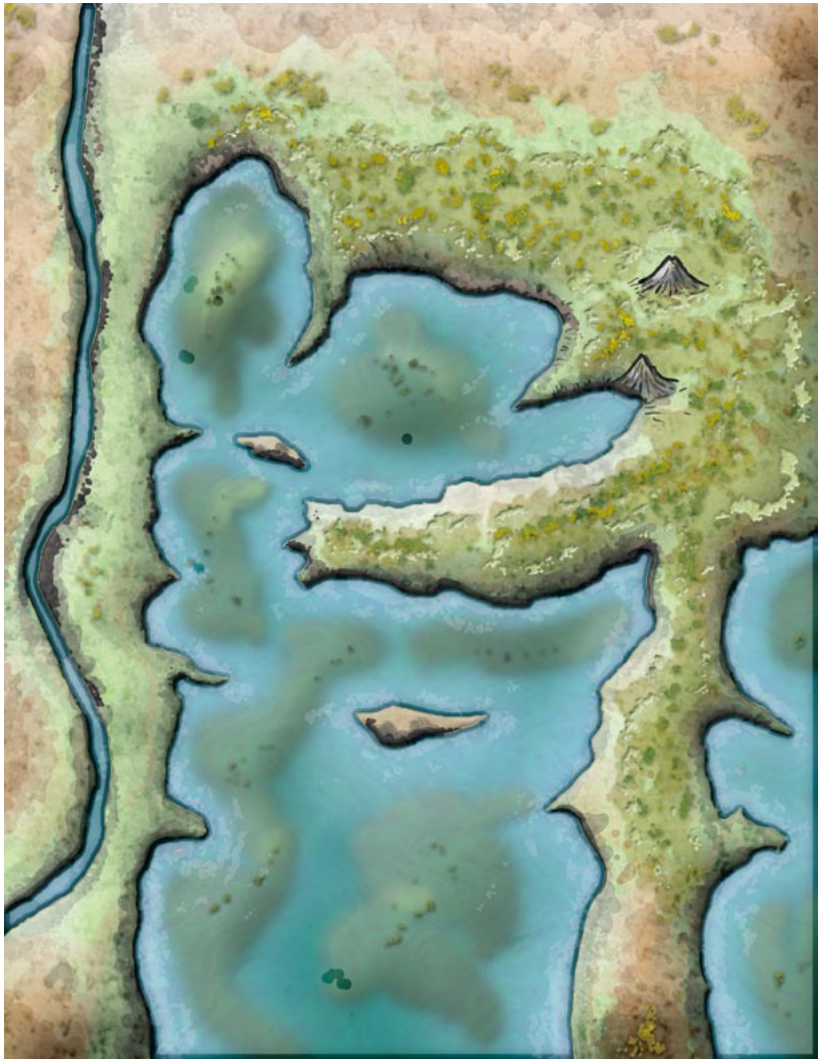
by Russell Brown

Deep in the Evermoors, a plan to conquer the town of Nesmé is forming, and the only person who can warn the town is about to be sacrificed to a slimy god. Can the PCs rescue the missing officer in time to save Nesmé? A Forgotten Realms adventure for 4th-level characters.

Dungeon #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



Robert Lazzaretti



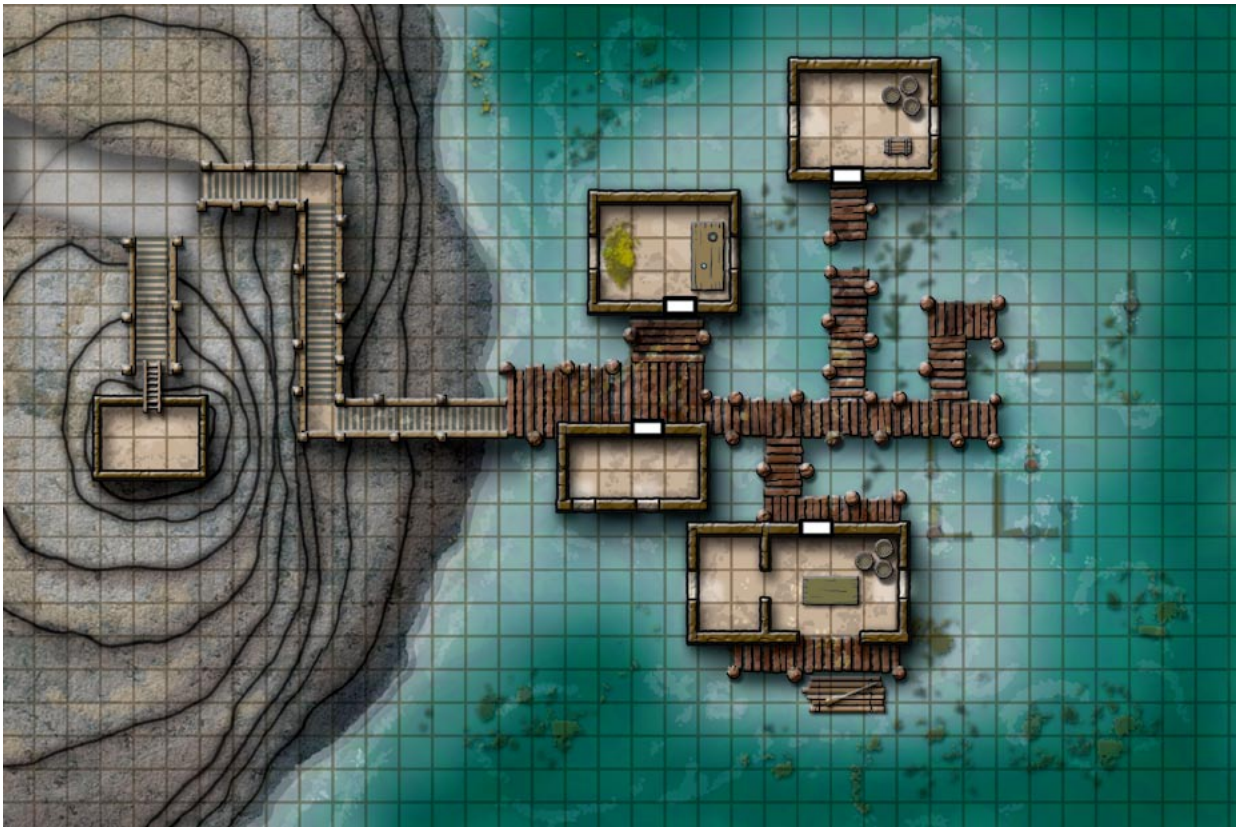
Robert Lazzaretti

DUNGEON #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

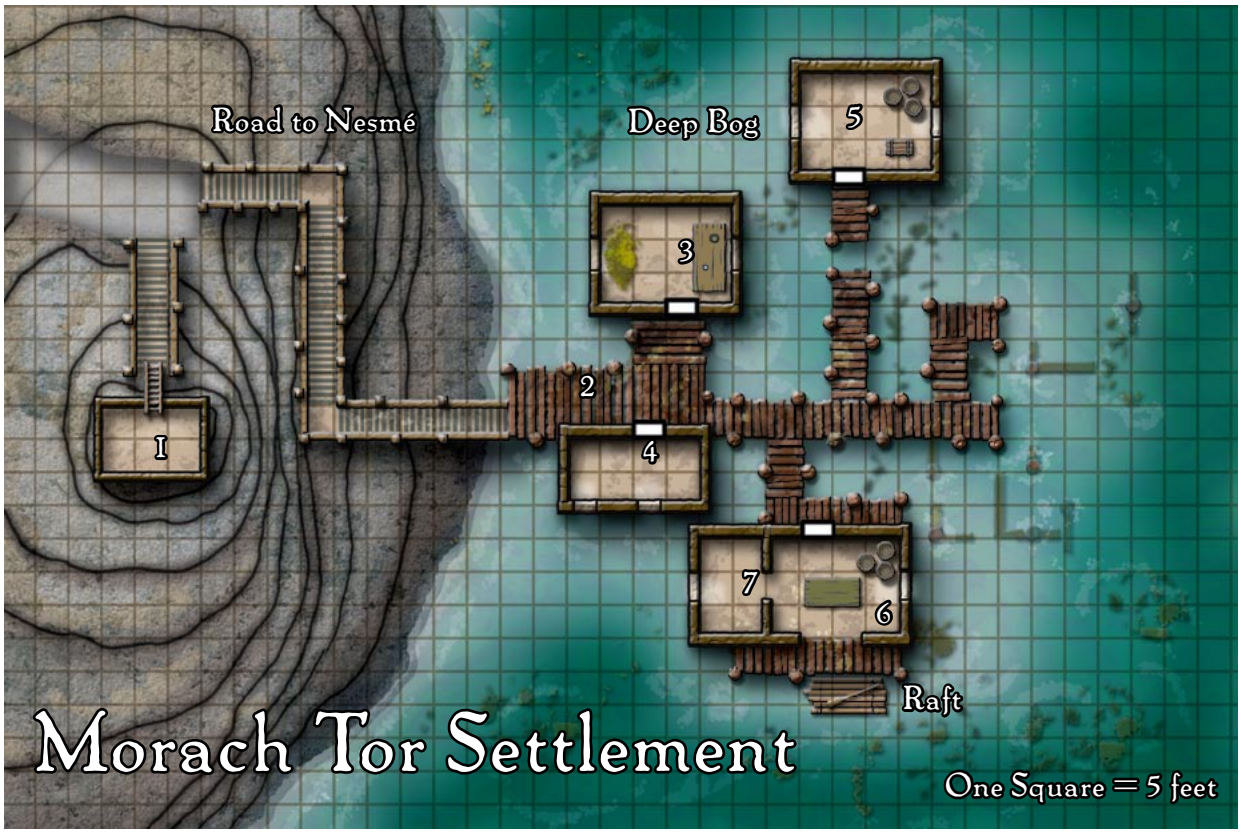
Robert Lazzaretti

Robert Lazzaretti

DUNGEON #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

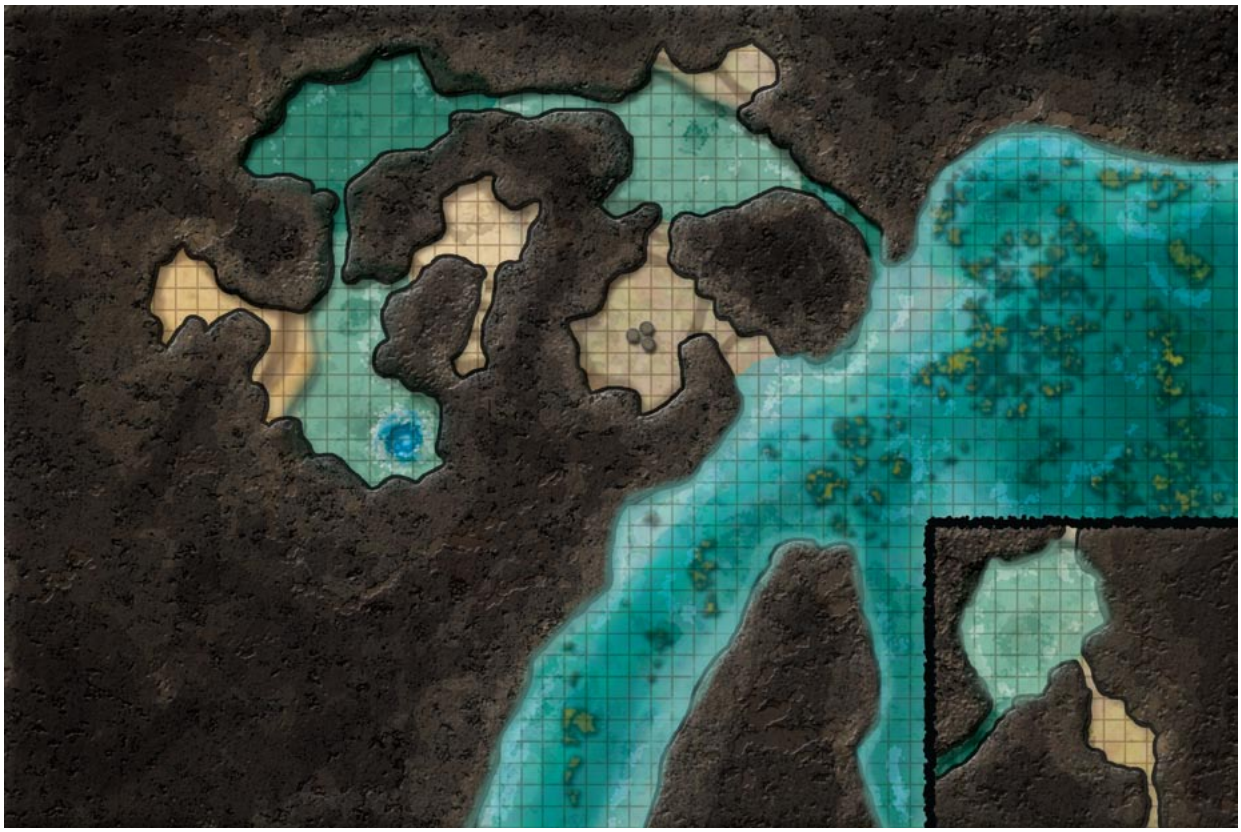


Robert Lazzaretti

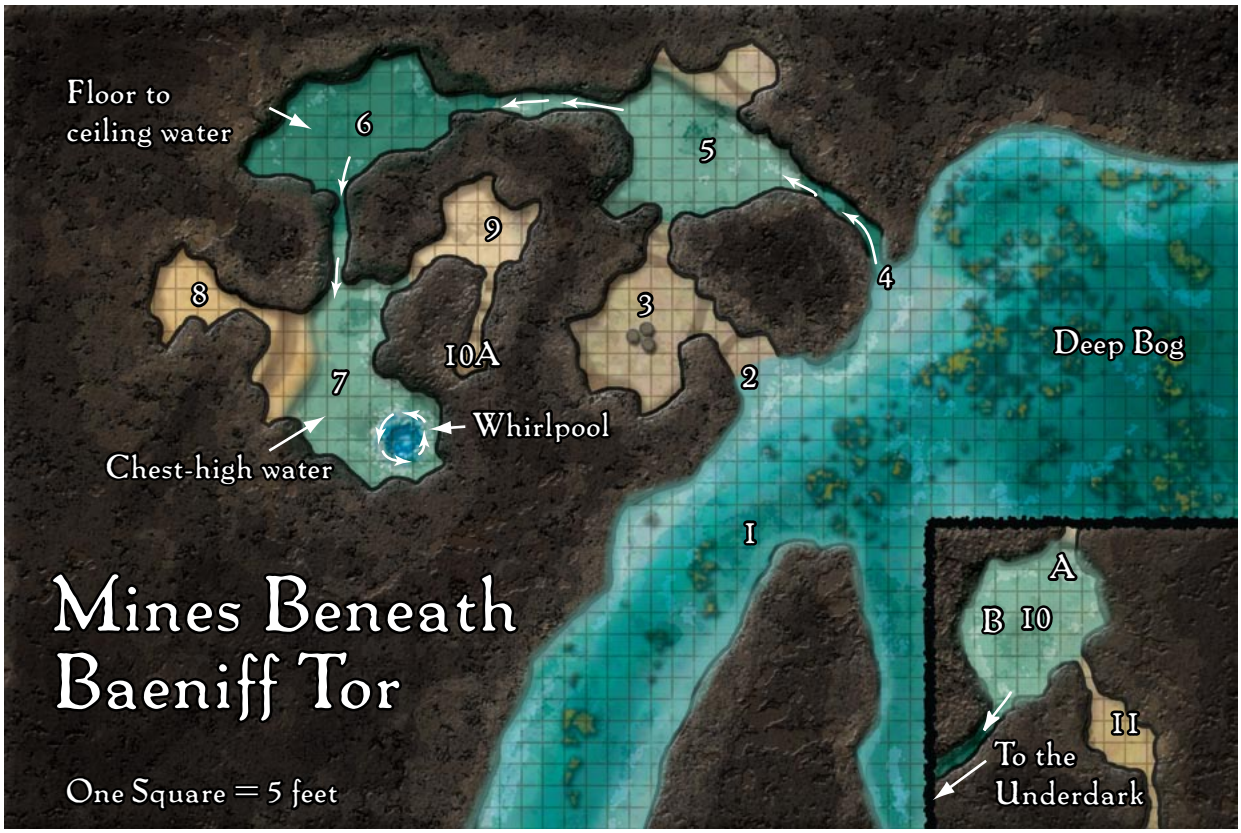


Robert Lazzaretti

Dungeon #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



Robert Lazzaretti



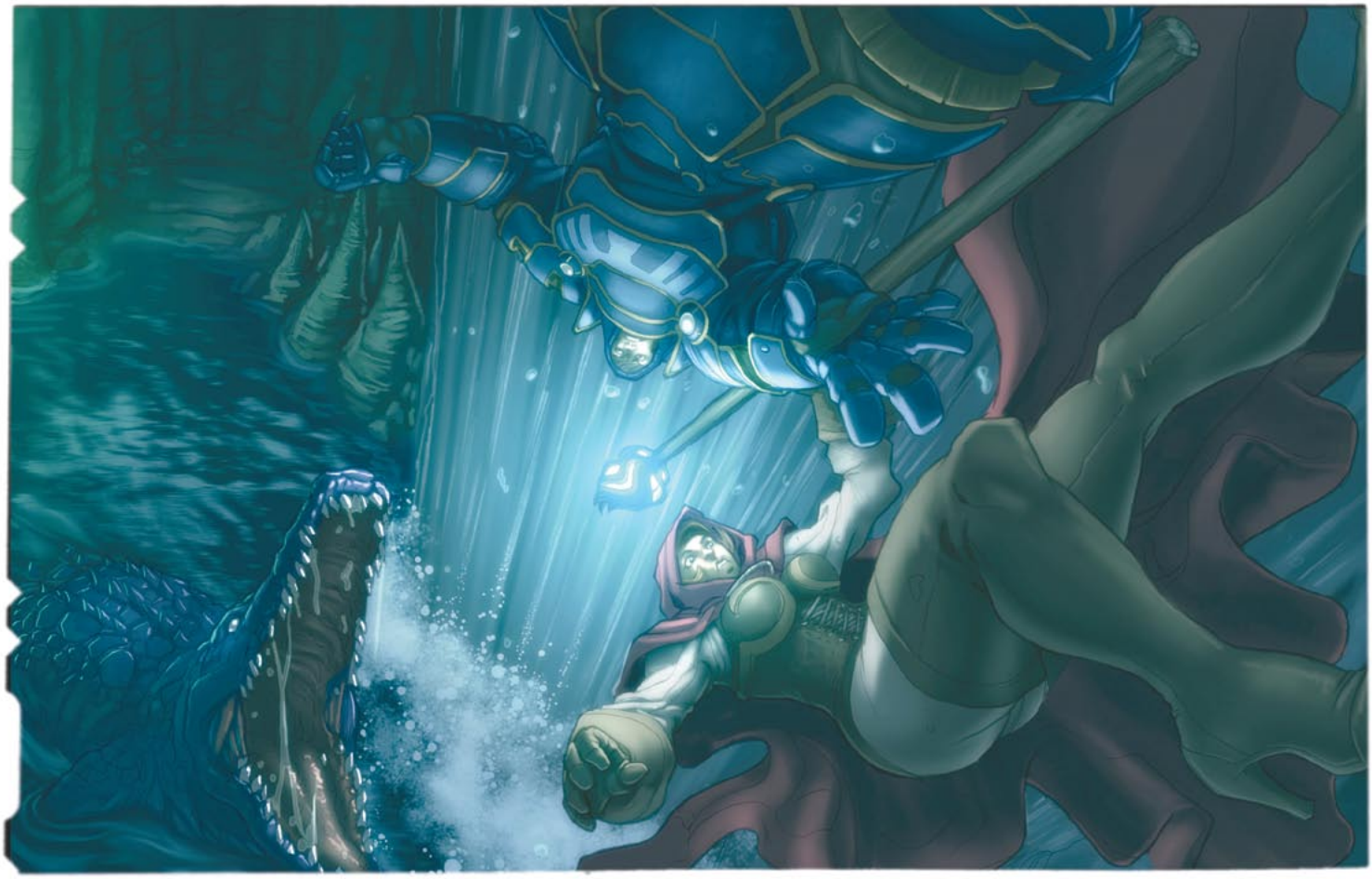
Robert Lazzaretti

Dungeon #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Uhndek

UDON with Joe Ng and Espen Grundetjern

Dungeon #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



UDON with Joe Ng and Espen Grundetjern

Dungeon #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Ben Wootten

THE LIGHTLESS DEPTHS

by F. Wesley Schneider and James Lafond Sutter

When the PCs journey deep under the Isle of Dread to find the source of the *shadow pearls*, they discover horrors beyond imagining in a haunted underground city perched on sanity's razored edge. A Savage Tide Adventure Path scenario for 11th-level characters.

DUNGEON #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Irgzid Uzeye

Warren Mahy

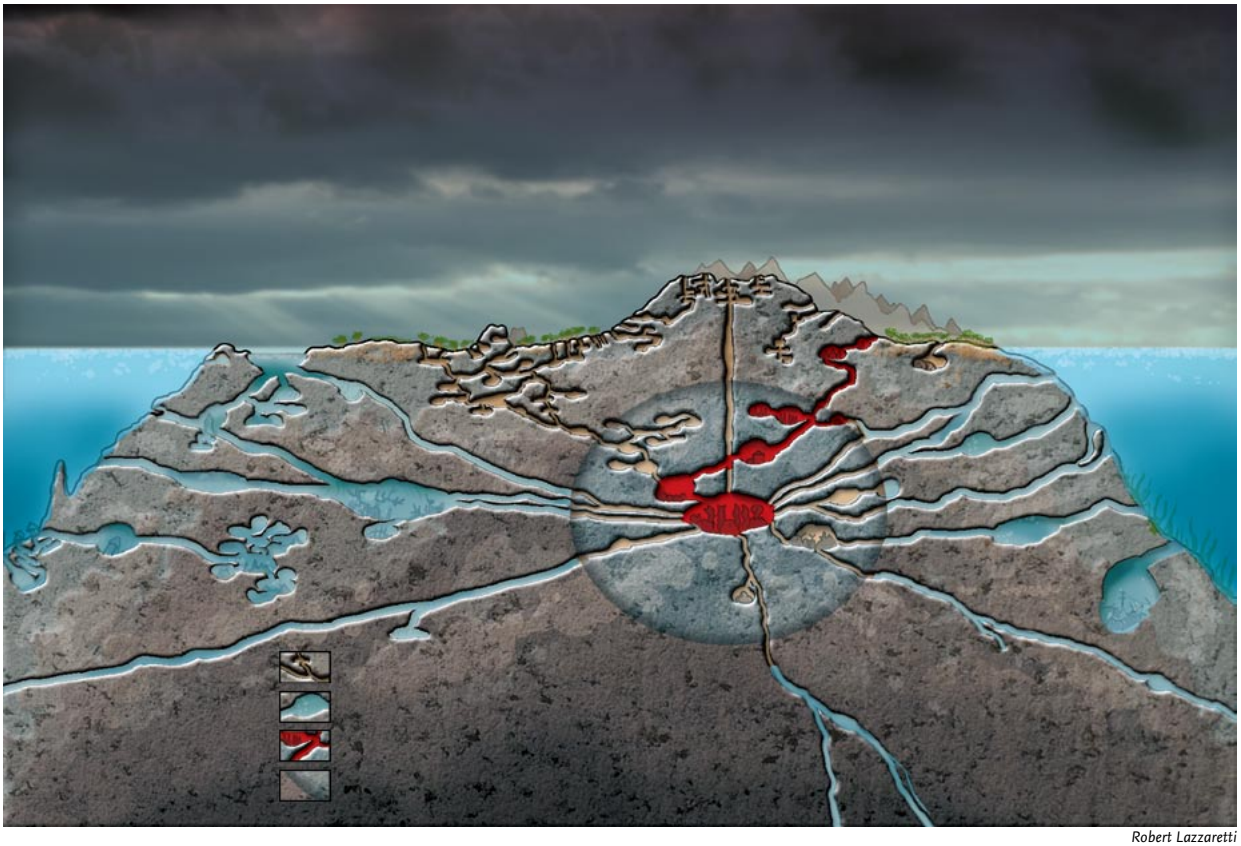
Excerpt From the Brine Harlot's Log—

We reached Gallivant Cove with no incident, although the Seventh Coil yuan-ti renewed their demands for shore leave. I denied them again, promising them all the leave they could want once my sister's little project is mine. Payment to the Glutton went smoothly (that beast's teeth would make fine trophies!), and I personally led a group of five to the caves. The trogs looked worse than they stank—some sort of malady afflicts them for certain. Lords of Dread? Hardly. Yet they took our payments and slaves readily enough.

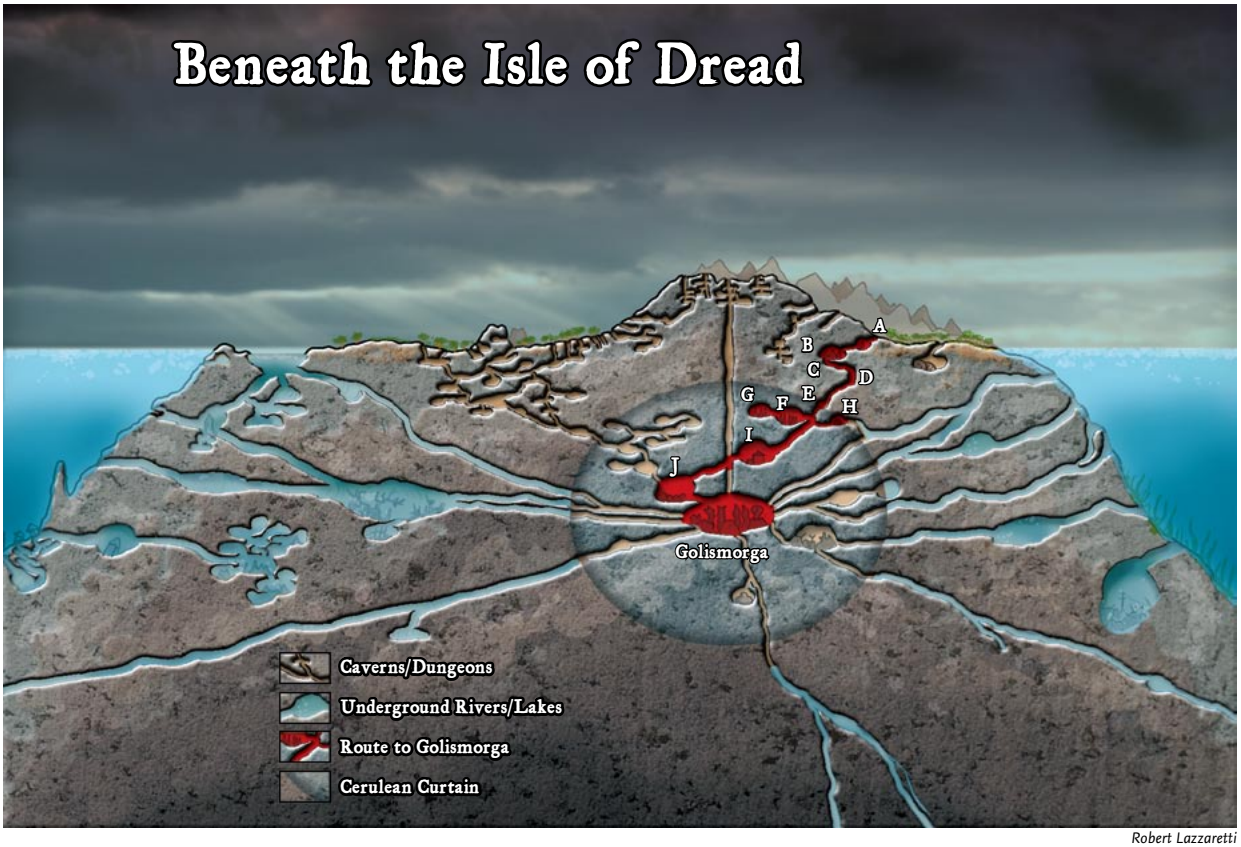
There was only one shadow pearl ready for us. I made clear my displeasure, but the simpering lepers convinced me that they were being truthful, and promised several more in a few months' time. I've tried to avoid staring at the pearl overmuch. Its depths are hypnotic. After seeing the number one of these little beauties did on Kraken's Cove, I make sure to keep it in a padded container at all times.

It's too bad we can't just toss the thing into Farshore with a catapult and let them kill each other off, but I'll not be the one to tell command we broke another of their toys!

DUNGEON #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

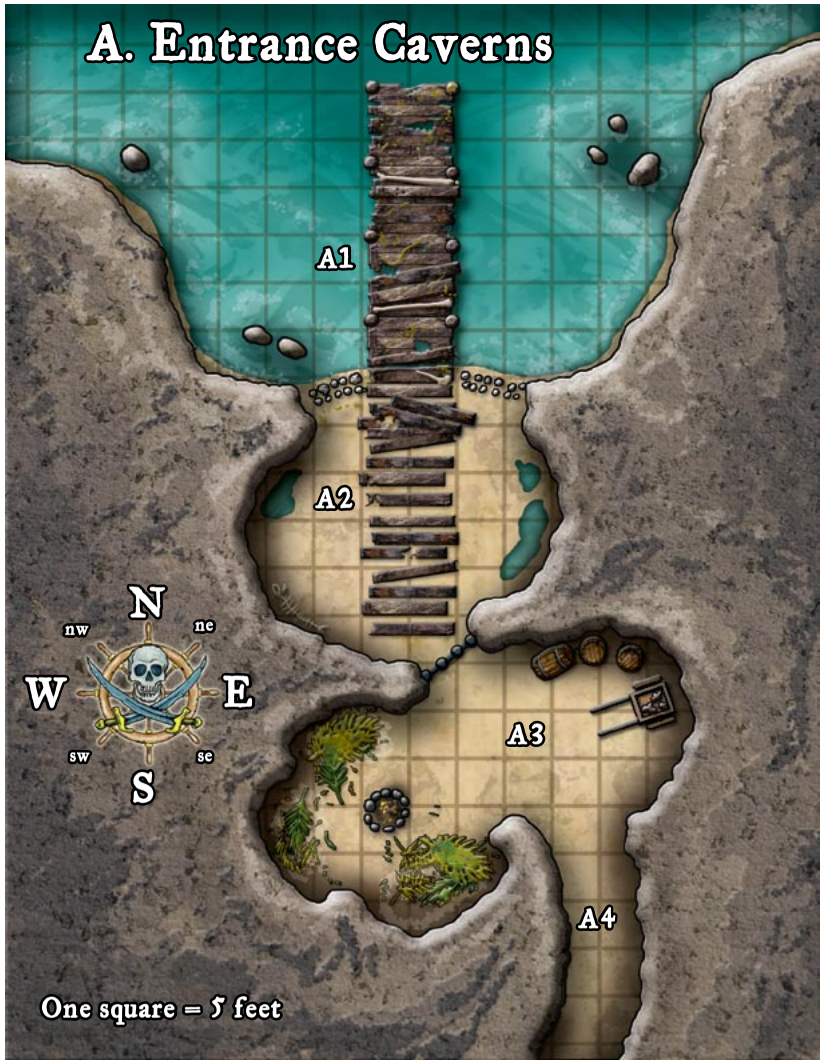


Robert Lazzaretti



Robert Lazzaretti

Dungeon #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



Robert Lazzaretti

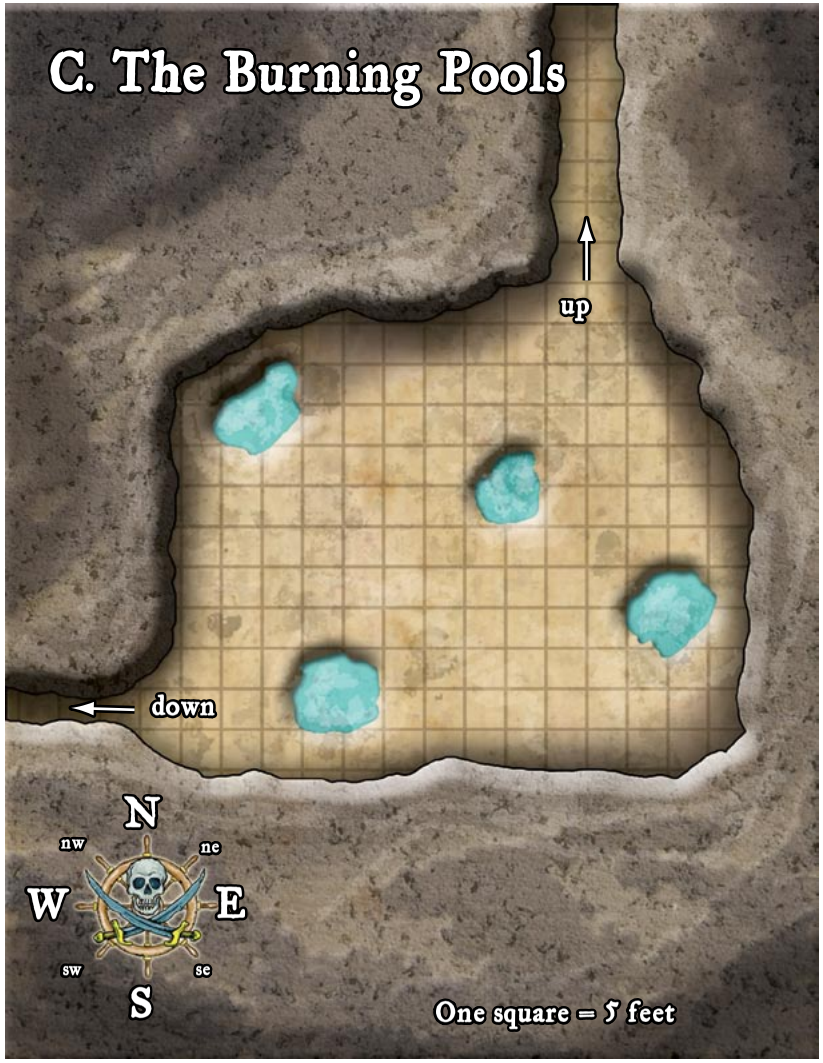
Robert Lazzaretti

DUNGEON #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

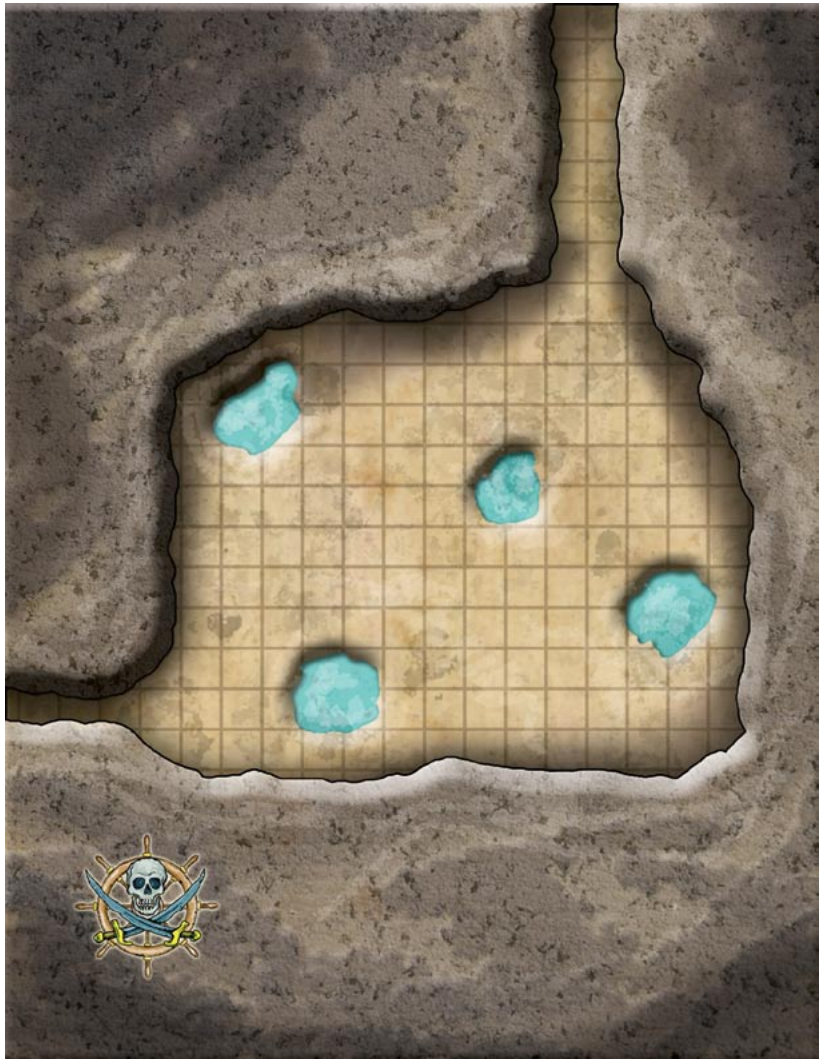
Robert Lazzaretti

Robert Lazzaretti

DUNGEON #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



Robert Lazzaretti



Robert Lazzaretti

DUNGEON #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Robert Lazzaretti

Robert Lazzaretti

Dungeon #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Robert Lazzaretti

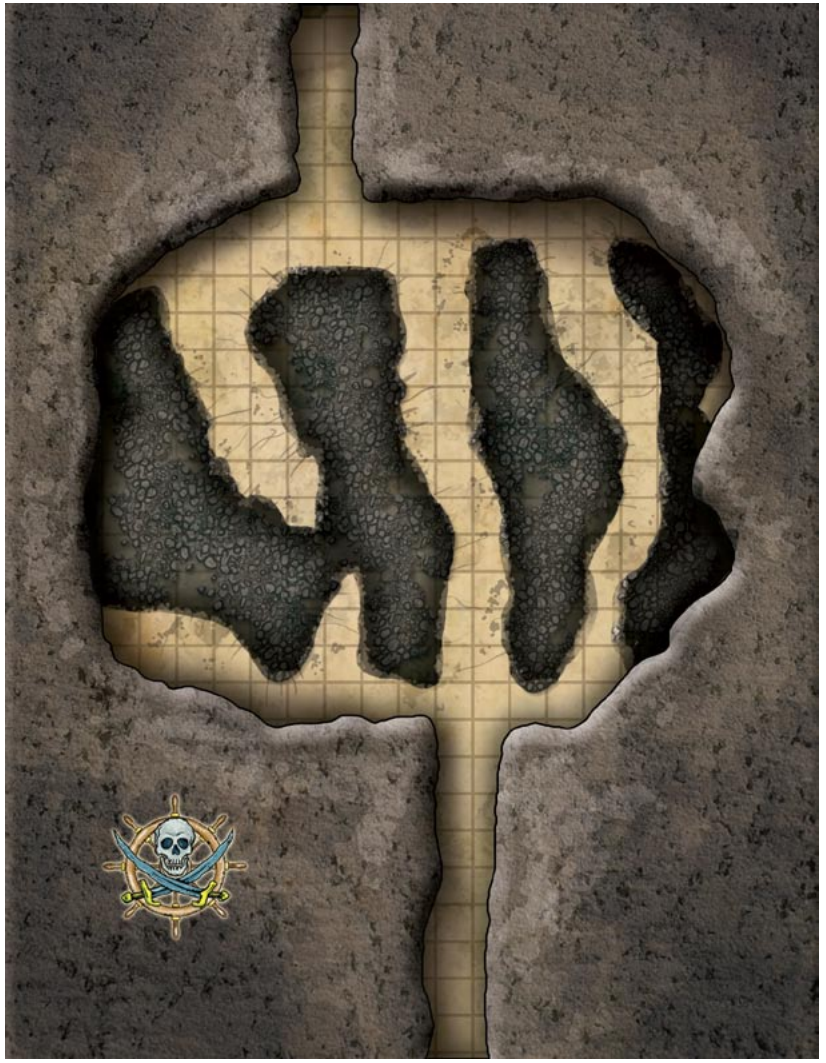
Robert Lazzaretti

DUNGEON #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Ben Wootten

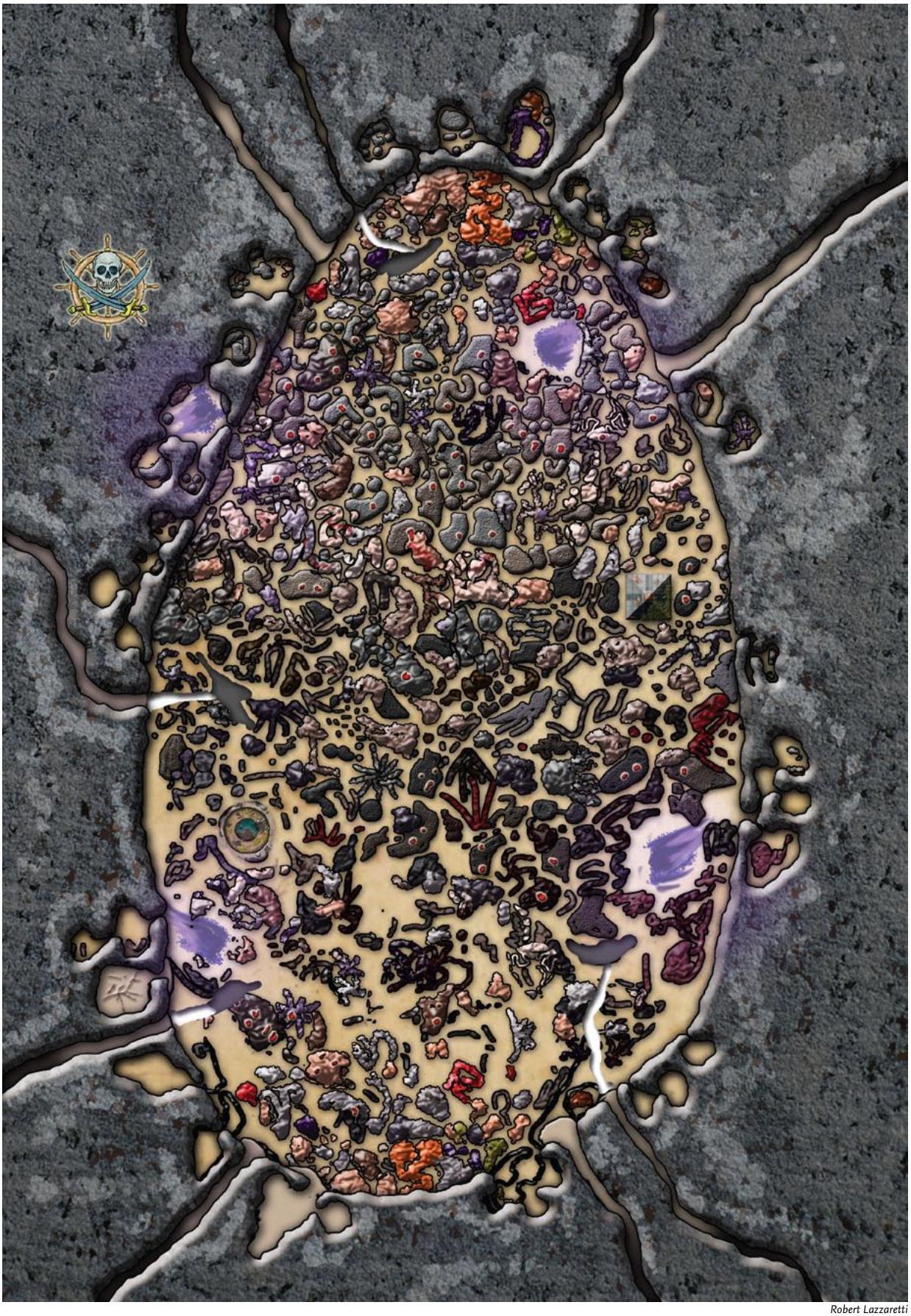
Dungeon #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Robert Lazzaretti



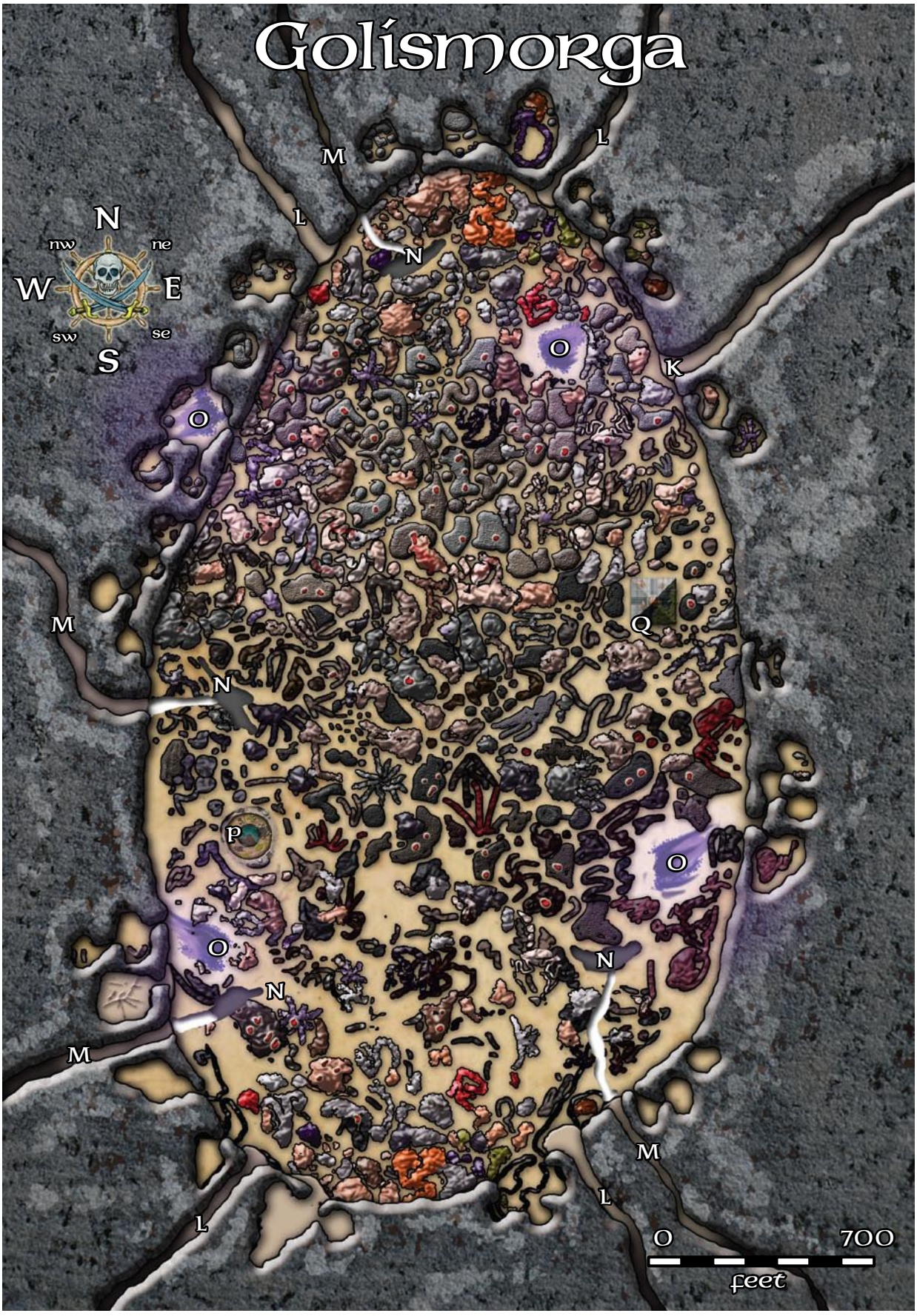
Robert Lazzaretti

DUNGEON #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



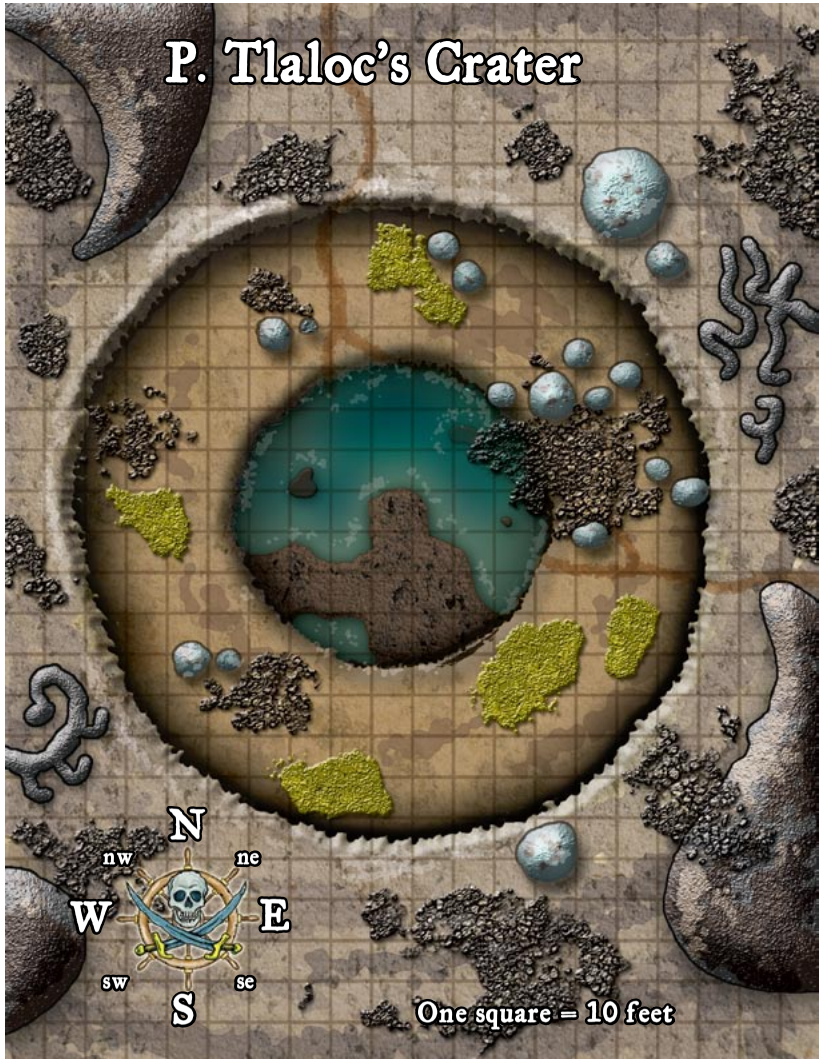
Robert Lazzaretti

Dungeon #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



Robert Lazzaretti

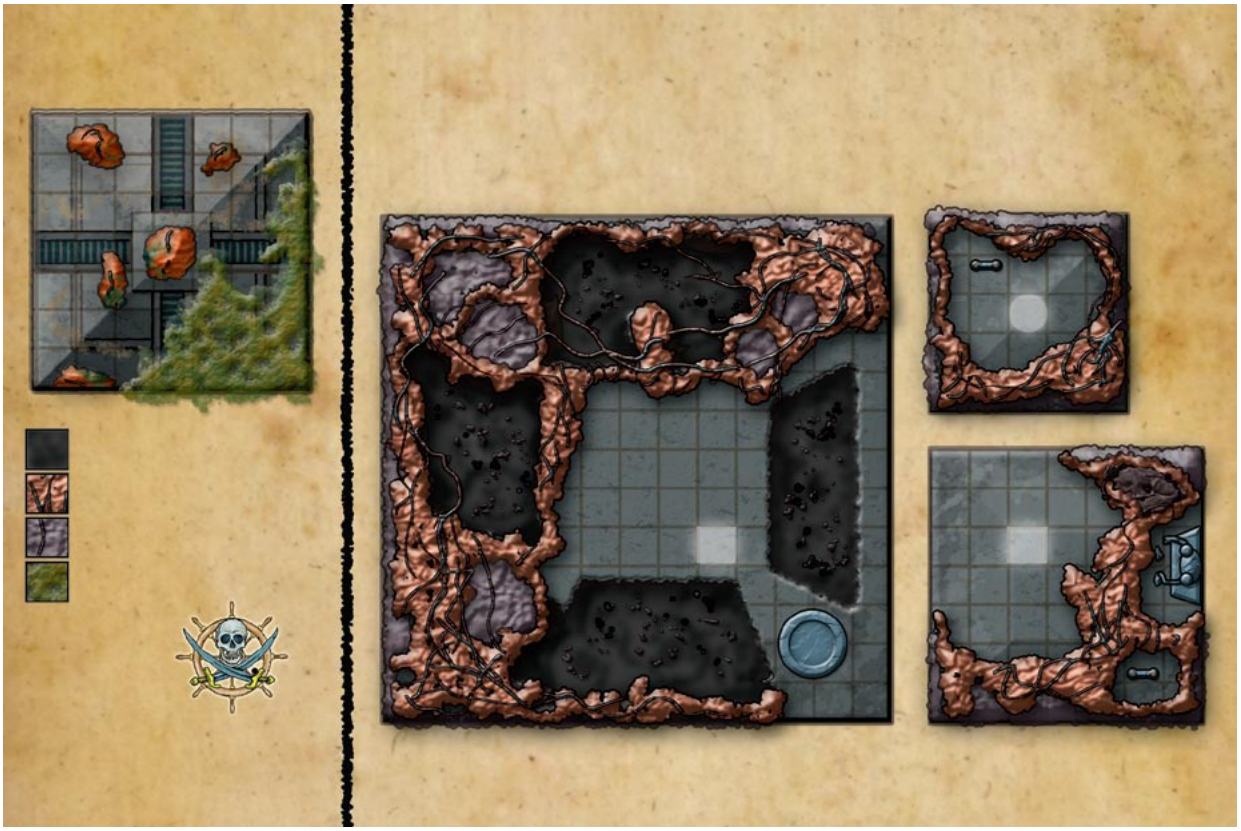
Dungeon #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



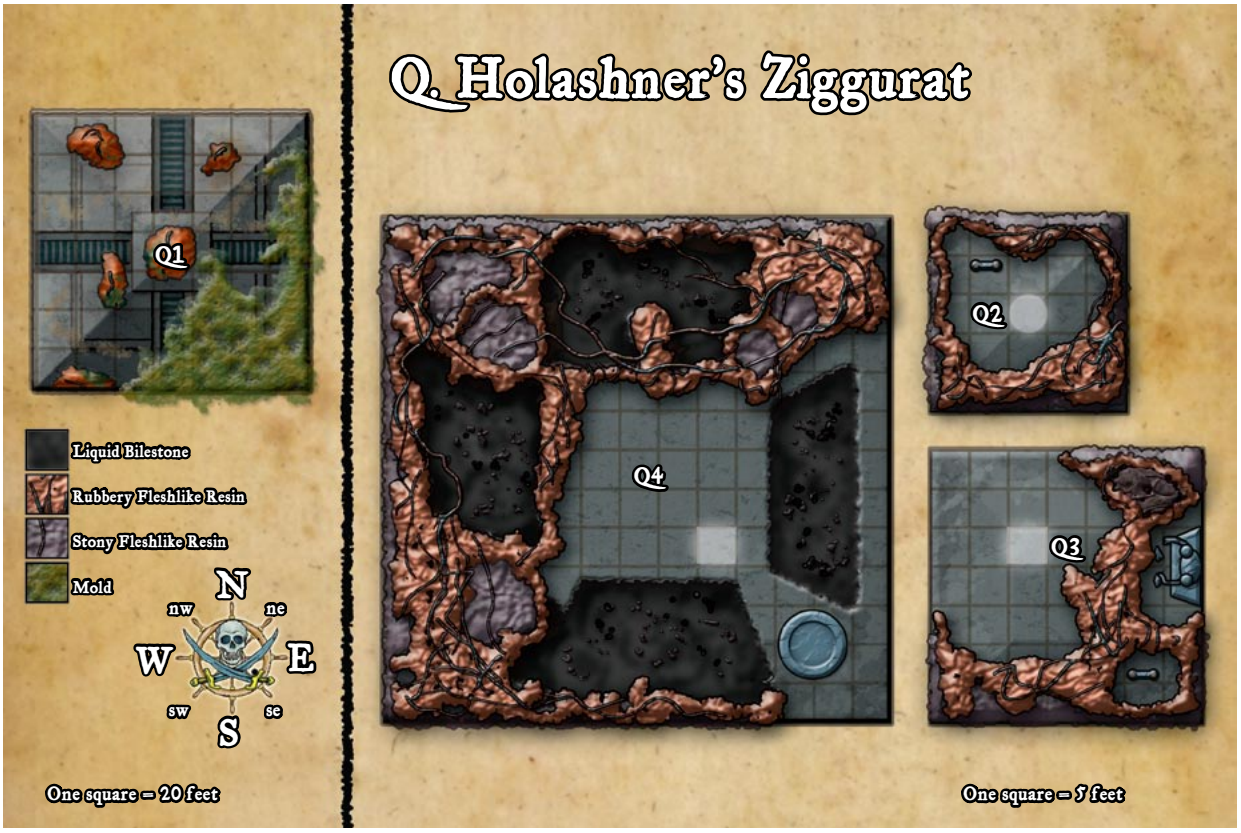
Robert Lazzaretti

Robert Lazzaretti

DUNGEON #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



Robert Lazzaretti



Robert Lazzaretti

Dungeon #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Ben Wootten

Warren Mahy

DUNGEON #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Ulioth

Ben Wootten

Dungeon #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

UDON with Todd Gak, Jim Zubkavich and Shane Law

DIPLOMACY

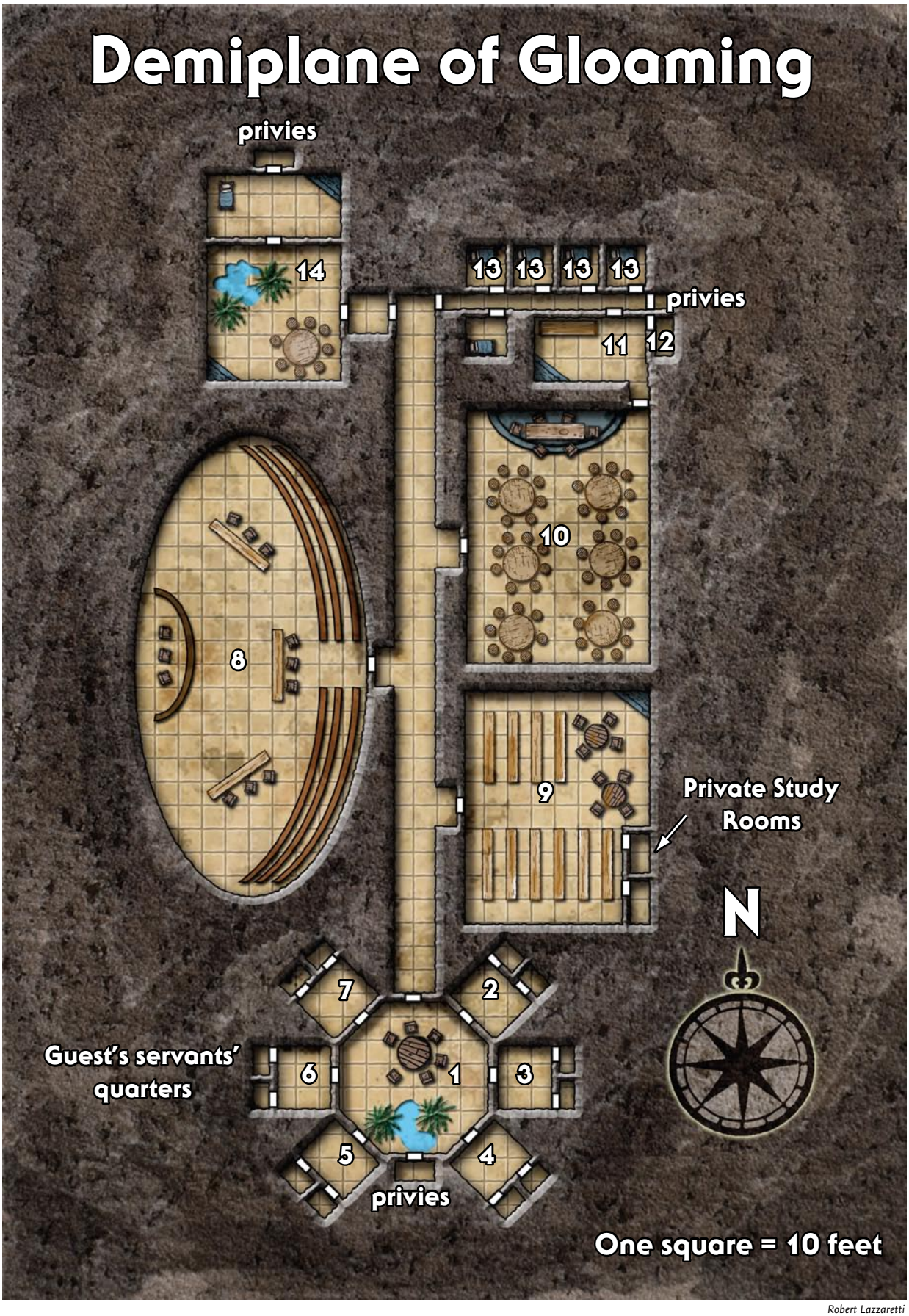
by Christopher Wissel

Matched against some of the most powerful, cunning, and ruthless races from across the planes in a battle of wits, it's the PCs' task to ensure that the wealth of ages does not fall into the wrong hands. But beware, for cunning wordplay is not the only way to win a debate. A D&D adventure for 18th-level characters.

DUNGEON #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Robert Lazzaretti

Dungeon #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



Robert Lazzaretti

DUNGEON #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Piramus Aristedes

UDON with Todd Gak, Jim Zubkavich and Shane Law

Claudiplude XII

UDON with Todd Gak, Jim Zubkavich and Shane Law

DUNGEON #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Arcturian Marsk

UDON with Todd Gak, Jim Zubkavich and Shane Law

Zin Omega

UDON with Todd Gak, Jim Zubkavich and Shane Law

DUNGEON #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Sharlocke

UDON with Todd Gak, Jim Zubkavich and Shane Law

Dungeon #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Chris West

Dungeon #144 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.